LIBRARY
Pacific Theological Seminary.
3069
ALCOVE, SHELF,
PRESENTED BY
ESTATE OF T.B.BIGELOW

CLARK'S WORKS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

SERMONS:

IN THREE VOLUMES,

BY REV. DANIEL A. CLARK,

Author of "Conference Sermons," "Church Safe," &c. &c.

VOL. II.

"He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully."

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY JOHN S. TAYLOR,

Brick Church Chapel.

1836.

WW
C547
v.2

Entered, according to act of Congress, in the year 1836,
BY DANIEL A. CLARK A.M.
In the Clerk's Office for the Southern District of New-York.

A. LUDWIG, PRINTER.

CONTENTS.

Page

22. The Bridgeless Gulf, ... 9
23. Heaven's Cure for the Plagues of Sin, No 1. 26
24. Heaven's Cure for the Plagues of Sin, No. 2. 41
25. The Nature and Results of Sanctification, ... 55
26. The Means of Sanctification, ... 64
27. The Great Physician, ... 73
28. The Man of God developed, ... 83
29. The Enemies of the Church made to promote her interests, 102
30. Man his Brother's keeper, No. 1., ... 130
31. Man his Brother's keeper, No. 2. 144
32. Wrath conquered by Love, ... 168
33. A Brand plucked from the Fire, ... 184
34. Gospel truth distinguished, ... 197
35. The Father the Prototype of the Son, ... 227
36. The Honest and Faithful Ministry, ... 238
37. The Wealthy Christian ready to Contribute, ... 263
38. The only Interest in Safe Keeping, ... 276
39. The Enlightened Conscience unbending, No. 1. 293
40. The Enlightened Conscience unbending, No. 2. 304
41. The Concentrated Results of the Gospel, ... 315

SERMONS.

SERMON XXII.

THE BRIDGELESS GULF.

Luke xvi. 26.

And, besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

THE evident meaning of the text is, that the rich man could expect no relief from heaven. Not only could Lazarus bring him none, but none could be brought. There was no communication between the two worlds. They were forever separated by an impassable gulf! and whether its bottomless caverns will ever be filled, or a bridge erected, I shall, at present, leave those to guess, who venture to doubt the plainest text, who dare to die in their sins, who hope to reach heaven by the way of hell, and who hang that forlorn hope upon a straw.

Two points the parable settles:—that the wicked shall be punished, and that they shall be punished after death. The rich man had received his good things. Now the beggar receives *his;* and the gulf that separates them is impassable. Christ did not make Abraham say that the rich man had received *part* of his good things, and that the gulf was not passable at *present.* We seem to be taught the irreparable loss of his soul.

To say the contrary is to charge Christ with using a figure calculated to deceive, and this is to blasphemously impeach his truth and his goodness.

Christ would not have represented the rich man as dying, and *then* lifting up his eyes in torment, if sinners were not punished *after* death. Nor would he have represented him as separated from the smallest comfort by an impassable gulf, if there were any possible relief for those who once make their bed in hell!

And those who deny that there is any hell but the grave, will gain nothing, when they understand this parable. Be it the grave or not, the rich man found it a place of torment; a place where sensitive beings enjoy no comforts, not even a drop of water to cool their tongues; a place partitioned off from heaven by a gulf impassable. I will here stop to quote one or two texts more, to show the weakness as well as wickedness of supposing that the Scriptures recognise no other hell but the grave. "The wicked shall be turned into hell," and so will the righteous, if this sentiment be correct—for the righteous, as well as the wicked, commonly find a grave. He who does not cut off a right hand and pluck out a right eye that offends, is in danger of having his whole body cast into hell. But if hell be only the grave, the whole body must be cast thither, whether the offending member be amputated or not. We read, that God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell. Did any one ever suppose, that the revolting angels were buried in the earth? Who that has common sense, and can use it, ever thought of putting spirits in a grave? Besides, we read of the fire, the brimstone, the darkness, and the torments of hell! Can this hell be the grave? My dear hearers, I cannot spend your time to confute an error so

weak. Its advocates must be left to their own stupid infatuation.

I shall proceed to inquire, whether the miserable inhabitants of hell have any hope of relief?

I. If their endless punishment is not revealed in the Scriptures, it could not have been. I mean by this remark that every varied form of words and expression is used in the Scriptures, to express this idea, that could be. After the process of the last judgment, the wicked are to go, accursed, into everlasting fire; where they are to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. And where the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever; and where they shall be tormented day and night, forever and ever. The words here used, are declared by the most approved lexicographers in the Greek and Hebrew languages to mean *eternal:* having no end. The same words, and others like them, are used in many texts, to express the duration of the miseries of the damned. And if they do not express endless duration, there are no words in those languages that do. And can we believe that they who used those languages had never received the idea of an eternity, or if they had the idea, had no words with which to express it? If, then, the Deity, in revealing his will, made use of the strongest words which human language afforded, to express endless punishment, and yet has failed, how *could* he have revealed this truth if it had been truth? It seems impossible, unless he had adopted some other mode of making known his will.

I cannot stop, brethren, to hear the quibbling of those, who, although they acknowledge that the fire will burn

forever, believe that the wretched victims will be released. It is as frequently and as strongly expressed, that the finally impenitent shall be punished forever, as that the fire shall forever burn. And it would be impeaching the character of God to suppose, that he would feed the flames of Tophet, while there was no employ for its fires. "Their worm shall not die." "They shall be tormented day and night, forever and ever."

But as to the main doctrine—what would men have had him say, that they might believe it? If he had said, They shall never escape from hell, would they believe him? This he has said. The very name of that place of misery indicates, that there is no escape. It is called a prison. "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." And as prisons are not usually left unbarred or unlocked, so we hear Christ say of this prison, "I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore; and have the keys of hell and of death." And to secure the prisoners still more, they are reserved "in chains under darkness." Their place of abode is also termed a pit, a furnace, and a lake of fire. These terms imply a place of fearful confinement The text assures us that an impassable gulf confined the rich man in this perdition.

Had he said, they shall never reach heaven, or be in the place where his people are, and where he is, would this satisfy those who try to doubt? This he has said. "Sinners shall not stand in the congregation of the righteous." "The unrighteous shall not inherit the king-

dom of God." Christ said to some of the Jews, "Ye shall die in your sins; whither I go ye cannot come." And in another place he says, "Where I am, thither ye cannot come." And the text again bars the finally impenitent out of heaven, by an impassable gulf. "They shall never see life, but the wrath of God abideth on them."

Had he said, Sinners shall never be forgiven, would this have given satisfaction? This he has said. Said the Lord Jesus, "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." And we read again, that to those who sin wilfully, after they have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. It is predicted, that those who regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operations of his hands, he shall destroy, and not build them up. This does not look like restoring sinners to happiness after their sufferings. This would be building them up. But God intends to destroy them and not build them up.

God threatens sinners that he will destroy them with *double*, with *everlasting*, and *perpetual* destruction. He intends to consume them in his wrath. He intends to make them a perpetual desolation. They are destined to die the second death. It is the divine purpose that they shall perish forever. He intends to blot out their names forever. They are to be the subjects of endless despair. They are to weep, and wail, and gnash their teeth. Such will be their hopeless and miserable state, that they shall seek death, but death shall flee from them. These expressions all look like irrecoverable ruin. And if the Bible does not teach this doctrine, it is of all books the most difficult to understand. Instead of being that simple, intelligible book, which I have always conceived it to be, I despair of

learning one truth from it. I would sell it for the fraction of a cent, and abandon myself to the fortuitous light of unintelligent nature.

II. If the punishments of the wicked are not endless, we have no security in the Scriptures, that the saints will be forever happy. Each truth rests on the same species of evidence. The same words are used, and the same form of expression in both cases. God has sworn that the one shall live and the other die—the one be destroyed, the other saved—the one redeemed, the other damned! The one is to go away into everlasting punishment, the other into everlasting life. The smoke of the torment of the one is to ascend up forever and ever, and, co-extensively with it, the other is to cry, alleluiah! Not a text can be found that more strongly expresses the duration of heaven's joys, than the miseries of hell. The Christian's hopes, then, of immortal blessedness are all a dream! He may yet learn the dreadful secret, that after tasting the joys of heaven, he may suddenly sink to the bottomless pit, and some fiend of darkness rise and fill his seat. And let Gabriel know that the prince of darkness, whom he thought to be an outcast forever, may yet walk with him, arm in arm, through the streets of the New Jerusalem, and he, perhaps, be sent to fill the infernal throne! When men embrace such sentiments, they scatter firebrands, arrows, and death; and give them their wish, they fill the middle and the upper world with tears.

III. If sinners are to be released from punishment, it must be on the principle of *mercy*, or of *justice*. Let us view both sides of this question.

Are they to be saved, finally, by mercy? Does this

idea comport with the sacred Scriptures? According to Matthew, sinners are to remain in the prison of hell till they pay the uttermost farthing. Or, as Luke has it, till they *have paid* the very last mite. They are also to suffer *as much* as their sins deserve. They are to receive the due reward of their deeds. They are to drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out *without mixture*, that is, without mixture of mercy, into the cup of his indignation, and are to be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. Now, if they are to pay the last mite, if there is to be no mixture of mercy in their cup, and if they are to suffer the due reward of their deeds, how can they be saved by mercy? When one has paid the debt, is there any mercy in giving him his discharge? Does not *justice* demand his release? If the hour ever comes when sinners shall deserve no further punishment, will not all hell rise in one united band, and press into the court of heaven, to sue for their immediate discharge, on the principle of right? And will a righteous God deny them their suit?

Do any feel disposed to take the other side, and advocate the sinner's final emancipation on the principle of justice? Then let this matter be fairly viewed. The Scriptures represent salvation as the result of *mercy*. "By grace we are saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God." To this point is the whole tenor of Scripture. By the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified.

Grace is to be the theme of the heavenly song. The redeemed of the Lord shall forever praise him who washed them from their sins *in his blood*. Now if any should finally make their way into heaven, whom

mercy has not redeemed, they could never join the song, or if they made the attempt, there would be endless discord.

Besides, brethren, when the sinner shall have suffered all that he deserves, and justice demands his release, it is absurd to speak of his being saved. From what is he saved? Not from deserved punishment, for no punishment is deserved. If any can have so base an idea of God, as that he would continue to punish sinners after they have ceased to deserve it, then we might conceive of their being saved from the effects of tyranny. And then indeed it would be absurd to speak of the sinner's being saved by the same hand that still wished unjustly to punish. If any then imagine that all will reach heaven at last who have fallen under the wrath of God, let them not speak of them as *saved*. There can be no salvation but for those who are exposed to ruin, and when they have paid the uttermost farthing, sinners are no longer exposed. And yet who ever thought of any reaching heaven but those who are saved by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Neither on the principle of mercy or of justice, then, is there any redemption from hell. And who can conceive of any third principle as a ground of reprieve from the pangs of the second death?

IV. Salvation is represented as being through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. But did we ever read in the Scriptures, that the Holy Spirit should descend and operate upon the hearts of the damned? And is hell a place where men are likely to come to the knowledge or the love of the truth? Under his tuition, who is a liar and the father of lies, can we hope for such effects? I have no doubt but that

those who enter the place of misery hoping one day to make their escape, will there learn one truth, which they are so unwilling to learn here. They will learn, to their everlasting cost, that till then they have always believed a lie. They will learn that he who has the keys of hell will never unlock their prison. In this truth their faith will then be strong—everlasting.

V. The Scriptures represent *Christ as the medium* of salvation to all who reach heaven. There is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved. But Christ will have done his work of salvation before any are redeemed from hell. We are taught that Christ must reign till he hath put his enemies under his feet, and that he shall then deliver up the kingdom to his Father. This passage is worthy of particular remark. Christ delivers up the mediatorial kingdom, immediately after he has sentenced the wicked to everlasting fire. After this period there can be no Christ to redeem them. He has then gathered in his elect, and gone to seat them at the marriage supper, and has left his enemies to contrive a way of salvation for themselves. The finally impenitent are not given to Christ, for those who are given to him shall *never perish*, neither shall any one be able to pluck them out of his hands. But those who go to the place of despair *perish*, and therefore are not given to Christ and will not be saved by him. Thus the argument chases the sinner down to hell and leaves him there, with no Saviour to redeem him. How he shall be able, unassisted, to burst its bars, or quench its flames, or quit its caverns, I leave those to guess who dare run the dreadful risk.

VI. The finally impenitent die with a wrong temper of heart, and must undergo a thorough change of temper and character, or there could be no salvation for them. Indeed it would not be salvation were they taken from the place of torment but left in possession of their evil hearts of unbelief. Salvation consists in being saved from the dominion of sin. Those who are rescued from hell then, must first be made holy. Now it would seem very strange that God should send them to that polluted world to acquire purity. Hell, it seems, is the school where men are qualified for heaven, and he their instructer who was too vile to live in heaven!

Can we believe that the flames of the pit will have any tendency to purify? Afflictions in the present world make wicked men no better. "Why should they be stricken any more, they will revolt more and more?" The merest wretches that ever appeared in the shape of men, have been those who had been subjected to almost perpetual affliction. And it would seem as though every stroke made them more stubborn. And why should the rod of divine wrath have a different effect in hell? That men will forever grow worse in that world I can believe, but to believe that they shall grow better, requires credulity which I do not possess.

And the decree of Heaven with regard to them is, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still." Evil men and seducers wax worse and worse. Men are to perish *in their iniquities*, and there is neither promise nor intimation that they shall ever be cleansed. How then can they ever be qualified for that world where nothing impure shall ever enter?

VII. We read that wicked men are to have their por-

tion at last with devils. "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." If then they are ever redeemed, their associates in misery will doubtless be redeemed with them. But we read that Christ did not take upon him the nature of angels, nor die for them. Devils have no share in his blood, nor any hope of emancipation through his merits. This question was long since settled. They must remain in their chains, and there is full reason to apprehend that men will forever have their part with them in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.

OBJECTIONS.

I feel it my duty to answer a few of the more specious objections to this doctrine. The more common objection is that drawn from the mercy of God. The argument is, that God is too benevolent to inflict so sore a punishment on his creatures. It seems they are afraid to admit the idea of endless punishment lest the sentiment should tarnish the divine glory. If they are sincere in using this argument they will manifest their sincerity by holiness of life. They will make it their constant effort to obey, and have others obey, the divine law. And if we do not see this, we shall doubt whether they oppose the doctrine we advocate, from respect to the divine character. But be their motive what it may the argument is flimsy. It is founded on this hypothesis, that it is more important that God should appear merciful than that he appear holy, just, and true. God is good, but he will forever hate those who are filthy and polluted. God is good, but he is so just that he will render to every one according to his works. God is good, but he is so true to his word that every threatening he

has uttered he will execute. If then any are saved, in their salvation mercy and truth must meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other. We are incompetent to say, what divine goodness operating in unison with the other attributes of Deity may do, or what it may refuse to do.

In this world some suffer all their life. From the cradle to the grave they hardly draw a breath in comfort. And these unhappy sufferers are not always conspicuous for wickedness. We see infants suffer from the day of their birth till they find an early grave. Now if all this is consistent with the goodness of God. it may comport with the same goodness, to leave those, who have spent all their lives in sin, and gone down to hell in unbelief, to suffer for their sins forever.

Besides, brethren, mercy must have some channel, through which it may flow out. While God pardons rebels he must still maintain the dignity of his character, and must support the honour of his law and government. And the Lord Jesus Christ is the only medium of mercy from God to sinners. Him the wretched sinner has rejected till he gives up the mediatorial kingdom. Hence there is no channel through which mercy may be communicated to the inhabitants of the pit. God will remain merciful and gracious forever, but his mercy will avail those nothing who have dammed up its streams.

Much is made of that text where Christ is said to have gone by his Spirit, and preached to the spirits in prison. It seems impossible that any one should have gathered from this text that Christ went and preached to the inhabitants of hell. When Peter wrote they were spirits in prison; but he does not say they were when Christ preached to them by his Spirit. Indeed, we are assured that this took place

at a time when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was preparing. During this time, that holy man, inspired by the Spirit of Christ, preached to them, and they continued disobedient. Now, they are spirits in prison.

For argument's sake, let us suppose that Christ did go and preach to the inhabitants of the pit. What would he preach? Doubtless the same doctrines which he preached on earth. He would demonstrate to them that the fire should never be quenched, nor the worm die. He would assure them that they should by no means come out thence till they had paid the uttermost farthing. He would repeat to them the divine decree, "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still." Could he contradict what he had preached to them on earth?

Provided he did preach to them the same doctrines which he delivered on earth, what would be the effect? Would those be profited by his preaching there who rejected him here? Would those who perished from Nazareth be any better pleased with divine sovereignty and election, than when they led Christ to the brow of the hill to cast him down, because he taught these doctrines? Would those who condemned the Prince of life, those who platted the crown, and those who drove the nails, and then went down to hell—would they now choose him as their Redeemer? Have the flames of the pit melted the hard heart? Shall we wait till men have known the bitterness of being damned, before we recommend Christ to them? Brethren, have any tidings reached you from the pit? The preaching of the Lord Jesus Christ—what effect does it have in the infernal prison? Does any revolting spirit ground his arms? Are any hosannahs to the Son of David heard to resound through the vaulted caverns of hell? My breth-

ren, falsehood is inconsistent with all truth, and always finds its way beset with contradiction and absurdity. Embrace the truth, and it is consistent and can be defended without an effort.

Much is said about Christ's descending into hell, and great exertions made to prove that this is the only hell. It is true that the same word sometimes means the grave, and sometimes the place of misery. It is worthy of remark, however, that words are used in the latter sense not used in the former. The grave is never called a lake of fire, or a furnace of fire, or a place of outer darkness. If we should admit, what is not true, that *sheol* in Hebrew, and *hades* in Greek, mean nothing more than the grave, we should lose nothing. The question is settled in texts where these words are not used.

And what if it could be proved that Christ descended to the bottomless pit? There was a divine promise that his soul should not be left in hell. The wicked have no such assurance. He is not there now.

If Christ went to hell, it is not said that he went to redeem its prisoners. We are not told that he bore home to heaven with him any of the spoils of hell. We are not told that he conveyed thither a drop of water to cool the parching tongues.

Much is said of Christ's restoring all things, and destroying the works of the devil. These texts, they say, settle the point that all will be saved. It is surprising how men will reason when they have first resolved how they wish a thing to be. Suppose a rebellion break out in a human government, and some brave general be sent to restore order, would this imply the indiscriminate pardon of all the rebels? If he should imprison some, and execute others, and intimidate

others, so that the rebels grounded their arms and forsook the standard of revolt, we should say that order is restored. So Christ must reign till he has put all his enemies under his feet. Then he is to give up the mediatorial kingdom to the Father. There is nothing said about his pardoning them all. Every knee shall bow to him; but it is not said that every enemy shall be brought to love him. A conquered enemy bows to his conqueror. Every one shall confess him to be Lord; but it is not said that all shall love him, and elect him as *their* Lord. His enemies shall feel and confess his power, and be trodden under his feet. During his reign they shall be cast into prison, and he, as Mediator, will go out of office, leaving them in bonds. The works of the devil are destroyed when his plan is frustrated, his hopes cut off, his emissaries ashamed, and his kingdom demolished. His works are destroyed when he and all his coadjutors are safely secured in hell. Then order is restored in the divine government, and is the better secured if some are made the everlasting monuments of his wrath.

Much is made of those texts where Christ is said to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, where he is called the Saviour of the world, and where he is said to be the Saviour of all men. The evident meaning of these texts is,

That Christ died for men and not for devils; for our world in distinction from any other.

That he died for sinners of one nation as well as another; for Jews and Gentiles.

That he made an atonement adequate to the pardon of all men; so that whosoever will may come and take the water of life freely. And

That he does save from temporal evils, and from

present deserved wrath all men. Through the merits of Christ, the basest of all men are allowed a probation, are kept out of hell while the offers of pardon can be made them, and they have opportunity to form their character for eternity.

In connection with these texts, we find woes and curses denounced against those who reject Christ, making it manifest that finally all will not be interested in his blood. The context in each verse limits its meaning. For instance, in that text where Christ is said to be the Saviour of all men, it is added, "especially of those that believe." Now if all, believers and unbelievers, are to reach heaven at last, how could Christ be in any special sense the Saviour of believers? But if all men are saved by him from many temporal evils, and believers from eternal misery, the text is plain. And provided honesty and prayer be our commentaries, the other texts are equally plain.

Instead of sinners being redeemed from hell, the dreadful probability is, that their miseries will endlessly increase. That they will continue to be disobedient and refractory, there is no room to doubt. Restraint being removed, they will doubtless feel and display more desperate wickedness than in the present life; and we cannot believe that God will release them from obligations to obey and love him, because they have become less disposed. The same law which is binding on us, will be in full force in hell. If, then, God continue to mark iniquity against them, and to punish that iniquity, their torments must for ever increase. And this doctrine we seem to be taught, when we are told that death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire. Instead, then, of their prospect brightening, it will darken. The clouds that hover round the pit will become more

and more impenetrable for ever; as often as they raise their eyes their hopes will sink. This dreadful point I will not press.

Now, my readers, if I have advocated the truth, the saints will love it; but if I have advocated error, those will love it who know not God and who obey not the gospel. This is always a fair touchstone of truth. Whatever sentiments we embrace, if we would recommend them, we must do it by a holy life. On whichever side of this question the truth lies, there will be seen the most holiness; for truth has a sanctifying influence, while error has the contrary effect. Several instances have happened within our day, of men murdering themselves and their families, having first embraced the opinion that all would be happy beyond the grave. I confess I feel afraid of sentiments that can so steel the heart, that a man can embrue his hands in the blood of his children. And if you please to term these extreme cases, look at those which are common. Where do you find the most religion, the most benevolence, the most humility, the most prayer, the tenderest conscience, the most meekness, and the most heavenly-mindedness?—in those who embrace, or in those who reject the doctrine of unlimited punishment? Where you see these effects, there is truth; and where there is error, these effects are not seen.

SERMON XXIII.

HEAVEN'S CURE FOR THE PLAGUES OF SIN.

Romans xiii. 8.

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another.

Sin has made this a miserable world. It has bred a host of unhallowed passions, which perpetually operate to widen the wastes and aggravate the miseries of the curse. One who was a stranger to these passions, and should see how they operate, would wonder if men were happy in proportion as they rendered each other miserable!—if their only remaining joy consisted in laying waste the inheritance of their neighbours. Else why with so much industry and perseverance do they endeavour to wrest from others their wealth, their good name, their influence, their quiet and their hope. And yet the inference drawn from all this would be incorrect. Men are not happy in rendering others less so. They may gratify malignant passions, but this gratification is not happiness; it but stimulates the plague that reigns in the bosom, and gives it an increased ability to destroy; it but feeds the fever that rages afterward with the more violence, produces inward distress, and preys upon the soul with a more unsatiable and incontrollable severity. Follow home the man who has been out to injure his neighbour, who carries home with him a shilling that is not his own, or the consciousness that he has made any inroads upon happiness or character, and as you live you find that man unhappy. He brings into his own family

the passions that raged abroad, and the bed that should give him rest, is a bed of thorns. He has obeyed the dictates of his own evil heart, but he now must listen to the reproaches of a wounded conscience. He is constrained to know that he has done wrong; and is strongly apprehensive of a re-action that will render his own territory in its turn the seat of a similar warfare.

The text enjoins a temper and a conduct by which men might render each other happy, might convert this desert into the garden of God, and make our passage through it gay and cheerful. The apostle had treated of the honour, the affection, and the duty which men owe to their superiors, and proceeds in the text to lay down rules that apply generally to all men; rules which, if observed, would tend greatly to meliorate the condition of the apostacy. We are to pay every debt but love. This we are to feel that we are to be always paying, but must ever owe. This is a debt that we are to be willing to owe to all men for ever. To this we are to be urged by the consideration that love is the fulfilling of the law; by which the apostle means, no doubt, the second table of the law. Hence he enumerates some particulars of that section of the decalogue: "Thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; thou shalt not covet;" and, that no part might remain unsaid, he adds, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." He then sums up the argument, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

I shall endeavour to *explain the nature of love, show how it will operate, and press the duty*, but shall dwell particularly upon the last article.

I. I am to explain the *nature of love.* There are two kinds of affection that have this title. One is an approbation and affection for a character that *pleases* us; the other is an ardent good-will toward beings capable of happiness. Both of these affections are exercises of the divine mind. God views all holy beings with approbation, and loves them in the first sense mentioned. Sinners he views with disapprobation, but still with compassion. Hence it is said that he is angry with the wicked every day; that is, he hates their character and conduct. And yet it is said that he "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, might have everlasting life." One of these affections, that with which he views holy beings, is termed complacency; God is pleased with them. The other, that which he exercises toward wicked beings, who are capable of being happy, is termed benevolence; God wishes them happiness. And both of these affections are enjoined upon man. God and angels, and all holy beings, we are obligated to look upon with complacency, and towards all men we are bound to exercise good-will: this is the affection enjoined in the text. It is our duty to feel kindly towards all men, to wish them happy, and, as far as in our power, accomplish our wishes. It may be well to say, however, that there is one exception. There are beings whom God has condemned to everlasting unhappiness. In this case, we may not wish to reverse the appointment of God, and snatch from misery those whose release would be inconsistent with the general good. We may wish well to all men, and still be willing to see the convict imprisoned and executed. This the good of the civil community demands, and this benevolence assents to, nay, even requires. He who would suffer the murderer or the

incendiary to go at large, would find it difficult to evince his benevolence. And God may be good to all, and his tender mercies over all his works, and still there may be some whom his benevolence may never render happy. There may go after the wretch whom the general good requires should suffer, a lingering look of compassion; there may follow him into his exile and his ruin the good-will that would have made him happy; but there may be felt towards other beings an affection so strong as to prevent it from being exercised.

This exception, then, plainly understood, benevolence, as enjoined in the text, is a high regard to the well-being of all creatures who are capable of being made happy. I was to inquire, in the

II. Place, *How this affection will operate.* Here the path for our thoughts is plain. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour. It will neither kill, nor steal, nor covet, nor defraud, nor witness falsely. It will lead to the discharge of every debt but one, and that one the debt of love; it will delight to owe and pay, and still owe for ever. Those whom we love we wish happy; and in proportion to the strength of that affection, will be the energy exerted to accomplish that object. If to be calm and content will render them happy, we shall be reluctant to ruffle their temper or move their envy. If to be rich, and respected, and wise, will make them happy, we shall wish their success in business, their increased respectability, and their advance in knowledge. If health, and ease, and long life, and domestic friendship, will add to their enjoyments, we shall wish them all these; and what we *wish* for them, we shall be willing, if in our power, to *do* for them. But if only the grace of God can make them blessed, it will be our strongest

wish, and our most ardent prayer, that God would sanctify them. Hence the reason why God's people expend the strongest efforts of their good-will to their fellow-men in rendering them holy. Hence the warnings, the reproofs, the threatenings, the admonitions of God toward a world he loves; and hence something of the same in his people toward those for whom they feel the highest good-will. I am ready to concede that the benevolence I describe does not exist but in the heart that is holy; and still it may be urged upon all men, as their duty, as that conduct, the want of which is their blot and their shame. What pleasure have we in contemplating the character of that man who does not wish the good of his fellow-men; but can see about him percipient beings like himself, whom he is willing should be less blessed than they might be? And yet, if we should judge from facts, we should be constrained to say that this character is common. He who would have what is not his due, what is it but a wish expressed, that his neighbour should be poorer than God has made him? He who would unnecessarily speak evil of his neighbour, does he not express a wish that his neighbour had a worse character than the providence of God has given him? And he who would irritate and provoke another, what wish does he express but this, that his neighbour might be less happy? I proceed

III. To press *the duty of benevolence*. And here I would premise that the good-will which I urge is to be exercised toward friend and foe. The good which real benevolence wishes its object, is of the same value in the possession of one man as of another. Benevolence looks abroad to find happiness, and wherever it can be found rejoices in it; or it goes in search of misery, and

wherever it is found, aims to convert it into joy. It is a pure and disinterested affection, hence is the offspring of a heavenly temper. I would urge it upon myself and my fellow-men,

1. By the *example* of God. I have already noticed that text in which he is said so to have loved the world, "that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish, but have everlasting life." God is said to be good to all, and his tender mercies are said to be over all his works. Even to the heathen world "God did not leave himself without a witness, in that he did good, and gave them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness." "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Thus God employs himself in making a world of sinners happy. How constant and how varied are the operations of the divine benevolence. Life and health, and food and raiment are his gifts, and are bestowed on his friends and his foes. No man is so impious but God continues to water his fields, and give health and fruitfulness to his flocks; surrounds him with friends and helpers, replenishes his table, and fills his cup, his storehouses and his barns; keeps all his bones that none of them are broken, and perpetually supplies him with countless sources of comfort. There is no year, no day, no hour, when his hand is not stretched out to convey benfits to every house about you and to every being, however regardless of His agency, and however ungrateful.

Now the text, and the whole Bible, just urges upon every man this same expanded benevolence. You are required to be a worker together with God. If many around you are your enemies, and you would urge this

as an excuse for neglecting to do them good, you are to remember that God does not act thus. The very man that you hate the most, is, it may be, the enemy of God; but God continues to do him good every moment, never neglects to cause his heart to beat and his lungs to heave; watches him at night and in the morning wakes him, feeds him, clothes him. And perhaps you are as much the enemy of God as the man you hate, but God is good to you. When you plough your field, and scatter your seed, you expect him to make it vegetate; and when you have sent out your ships, he sends the generous and friendly gale. Then why not imitate an example so infinitely illustrious? If there is not a foe you have, but God is doing him kindnesses every day, and he is perhaps as much, nay more, the foe of God, why not go and do likewise? It would not injure you: it would not disgrace you. If it would render you unhappy to do what would render your enemies happy, then know that you have not a godly temper, that you have not the benevolence which the gospel requires. God is happy while he makes glad his enemies. It gratifies the benevolence of his heart, if they rejoice. But you would carry, it seems, if you could, sorrow and vexation to every house where you have not a friend; you would measure their worthiness by their attachment to you, and *your* benefits by *their* worthiness. But God has pleasure in doing good, if from the heart that he makes glad there never rises any incense of praise or one note of gratitude. He is pleased when men are sensible of his benefits, and when they love to praise him, but it gives him joy to do good, abstractly from any return that creatures make. Now we can meet with no case more forbidding than God meets with. There are some into whose bosoms God has poured his blessings these seventy

years, and there has never yet been awakened one sentiment of gratitude. There has risen to his throne every hour the murmurings, the repinings, the complaints, and the spleen of an impious heart; and, perhaps daily, the vibrations of profane and lying lips. Yet all this never induced the Lord to leave his fields one year unwatered, or leave him one day without light, and food, and reason. Who is there, then, that can have a foe so inveterate that he is not under obligation, if in his power, to do him good? If then we find ourselves, instead of exercising such a spirit, engaged in injuring a fellow-creature, we have only to recollect how differently God is doing at the same moment. We are wronging him, and God is feeding him; we are defaming him, and endeavouring to diminish his influence, and God is giving him health, and wealth, and friends. Now one is thus placed in a very unpleasant attitude. Suppose Jehovah visible; he and you meet at your neighbour's door; you have come to ruin him, but God has come to bring him blessings. He is your enemy, and he is God's enemy. He has *once* injured you; God he has wronged and abused every day he has lived. And when the Lord has supplied *his* wants, he comes to your door and supplies *yours*, and you perhaps have been as base a rebel as your neighbour. Now, although God is not seen by the eye of sense, the fact is not altered; his benevolence leads him all this length. He bestows blessings every hour upon the man you would injure; supplies the wants that you create, heals the wounds you inflict, and repairs the reputation you destroy. O, let shame cover us! and let the benevolence of God teach us to drop our blessings on all men, at all times, if they are within our reach, and we have any good to bestow.

2. We are urged to the same duty by the *com-*

mand of God. God does not exhibit his example before us, and leave it to our option whether we will do like him. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This is the law, precisely, by which heaven has bound us. Whatsoever, then, we would that others should do to us, we are to do the same to them. The command is, "That we love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use us, and persecute us." It is enjoined, "that we love one another with a pure heart, fervently." "That we honour all men." "That we be pitiful and courteous." "That we submit ourselves to one another," and be clothed with humility. "He that would be great must become a servant." "We are to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." "Nothing is to be done through vain-glory, but each, in lowliness of mind, esteem other better than themselves." "Every man is to look not on his own things, but every man also on the things of others," that thus the "same mind may be in us which was also in Christ Jesus." "We are to follow after the things that make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another." We are to have that "love that worketh no ill to his neighbour." We are to "love not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." God urges that we should love one another by the consideration, that he so loved us, that he sent his son to be a propitiation for our sins. Thus are we taught of God to love one another.

And the Scriptures teach us what the effect of this love will be. It will lead to an *affectionate deportment*, and a readiness to serve each other. It begets a spirit of *forbearance*, of *truth*, of *unanimity*, of *self-denial*, of *meekness*, and *forgiveness*. It "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." It beareth all things, be-

lieveth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Thus do we see a few of the outlines of the code of love. Thus the divine authority binds us to the exercise of that same benevolence which God displays in his providence toward all men. Hence our obligations to be benevolent will bear, in our view, an exact proportion to our respect for the authority of God: if the latter be supreme, so will the former.

3. Benevolence affords its possessor a *permanent* and *high enjoyment*. It is, in its nature, a sweet and calm affection, has its origin in heaven, and exerts a sanctifying influence upon every other exercise of the soul. It is an affection which we can contemplate with pleasure, and view with complacency. If I know that I love my fellow-men, I am conscious that I feel as God does, and as he commands me to feel. I see, in that case, the image of my Creator in my heart. Hence it begets joy and hope. I believe, then, that God has wrought in me, by his Spirit, has left upon the heart his own impress, and will one day make me wholly like him, and take me to himself.

But this is not all: a benevolent heart makes all the happiness it sees its own, and thus widens, indefinitely, the sphere of its enjoyment. It has a real pleasure in another's joy, and still does not diminish the good on which it feeds and thrives. If there is harmony in the civil community, or domestic quiet in any house, or joy in any heart, or peace in any conscience, the benevolent man enjoys it all, and makes it all his own. The whole aggregate of enjoyment about him becomes appropriated to himself; if *any* are happy, he is. The man of *taste* will enjoy what is the property of a neighbour. If he can see, within another's enclosures, a verdant spot, a lawn, an orchard, or a grove, his eye extracts from it a pleasure,

which no power can prevent, which no barriers can defend. It is his right, for no one suffers by his enjoyment—no one is made the poorer by his claim, or suffers to serve him. So the man of real benevolence gathers into his own heart the joy that elates the hearts of others, and into his own home, the quiet, the good-will, the condescension, the harmony, and the hope, that prevail in the home of his neighbour.

Let there be enjoyment *any where* about him, and it increases *his own*. Hence he is the only man who can beguile the miseries of human life, and rob the old serpent of his sting. Nothing can make him miserable, if there is happiness any where. Rob him of his comforts, and, in an hour, he can go and gather more. So the bee, if you take away the bread he has brought home, can hie him away to some opening flower, and gather a new supply. Hence in the dark hour, when all others are wretched, the man of real benevolence can be happy.

> The soul that's filled with virtue's light,
> Shines brightest in affliction's night,
> And sees, in darkness, beams of hope.

But you tell me, that philanthropy, in a world so miserable as this is, is likely to create more misery than joy. In every look we take athwart its wastes, there strike the eye ten objects, *polluted*, *deformed*, and *miserable*, where there is one of order, joy, and beauty. Hence it would seem, that the man of kindest feelings, must be the greatest sufferer, whilst the callous and the cold, who are unmoved by human misery, and have no tears for another's wo, have the greatest share of enjoyment. All this seems *rational*, but is not *true*. Benevolence is an affection, which carries its own

reward with it, and must render the heart happy that puts it forth, were there nothing about it but misery. It finds a kind of relief in its own tears, and if all the objects on which it can fasten a look of sympathy must remain unhappy, it can gather to itself enjoyment from the sympathy it feels.

But the benevolent heart is not driven to this alternative. This world is not *wholly filled* with misery. There may be a dreary spot just here; a dearth of piety, the absence of all holiness, and the presence of stormy passions; but beyond this scene, there is fertility and life. God there appears in his glory, men are sanctified, and are made happy, and there is joy and gladness. The benevolent Howard spent much of his life in the prison, but he was comforted to know that this world was not all a prison. He carried with him into the recesses and the infection of the dungeon the recollection, that the sufferers about him were not the whole of this world's population. There were those at a little remove from him, who did not wear a chain, nor want for bread, nor sigh for liberty. There *were* dwellings into which the light of heaven might shine, where reigned health, affection, and joy. Upon these, when he could look at misery no longer, he could cast his eye and find relief. So the man in this age, or in any age, whose heart expands with benevolence, but who may chance to see misery all around him, has only to widen the circumference of his vision, and it embraces objects that can give him joy. If the case require he can look beyond this world to heaven. There every object will gratify the benevolence of his heart. All its inhabitants are holy and happy, beyond what hath entered into the heart of man to conceive. There is not one object in all its happy realms, on which,

while the benevolent heart lingers, it feels not the most exquisite delight. Thus the good man, if the misery about him gives him pain which he can hardly endure, having that faith which gives him the power of flight, can wing himself to some happier clime, and inhale refreshment from scenes more adapted to his taste.

And there is one other thought from which we discern, clearly, the advantage of the benevolent man above all others, notwithstanding the pain he endures at the sight of misery. The heart that is not benevolent is, of course, the seat of passions far more corroding and painful than the keenest sympathy. Pride, and envy, and ambition, and covetousness, with other kindred tormentors, hold the entire ascendancy, where the heart has not been melted into love. And who that has been the prey of these devourers, and has any conviction of their power to destroy, would not rather feel a philanthropy so pure, and be surrounded with miseries so multiplied as to keep the heart bleeding with sympathy, rather than be committed to their merciless and arbitrary supremacy? He who looks upon poverty, and famine, and nakedness, in their most appalling attitude, and *would give relief* but *cannot*, must indeed suffer intensely; but still he enjoys a heaven, compared with him who sees others too happy, and envies them. The one, in the midst of all his tears, can be tranquil and submissive, while in the bosom of the other there burns a fire that consumes him. Howard found his joy diminished, because he looked upon plagues which he had not the power and the skill to cure; but compare the state of his mind, with his who has coveted, but cannot possess the enjoyments of others, and, as you live, the one savours of heaven, and the other of hell.

If the objection had any weight, it would prove that God must be unhappy. His benevolence is infi-

nite, and there lies, under his full inspection, the whole aggregate of pollution and misery that have found their way into his dominions. Even hell has no covering. He sees all the anguish and despair, hears every groan and sigh that escapes the lips of the lost. Still God is infinitely happy, and will be when every incorrigible rebel shall have made his bed in the pit, and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever.

And the more we are like God the more happy. Import into this world that same benevolence that led God to make his Son a sacrifice for sin, and you would fill it with piety and joy. And those who are losing the Sabbath at home, as they saw you pass, would half believe that you were angels. You would then apply yourselves to make this section of the apostacy more happy. You would heal every quarrel, would soothe every wicked passion, if you might, would check every prevailing vice, and relieve every want. You would go home and purge your house, and your neighbourhood, from whatever would breed pollution and misery, and we should soon all forget that we had ever been unhappy. Life would steal away like the pleasant sceneries of a dream, and death would lose its terrors. We should almost forget that this world was not the rest that God has promised us. We should imagine ourselves suddenly transplanted into the midst of angels, should see in every face the countenance of a brother, and hear in every accent and in every song, the symphony of a heavenly friendship.

Do you say that I now tell you of heaven. Nay, *heaven*, one from that world must describe it. I tell you exactly what a little spot of earth might be, and what we might make it, were it not for those accursed passions, which we industriously cultivate, and which collect us

joy from another's misery. Only let us feel that none about us can be too wealthy, too respectable, or too happy, to give us pleasure, and half the curse of the apostacy is removed. Let us feel that every wo another suffers is as much our own as his, every tear he weeps and every song he sings our own, and this world would cease to be a wilderness, and would become like the garden of God.

Let us then retire with this reflection,

Men are their own tormentors! Would they exercise benevolence, and exert themselves to make each other happy, much of the misery of this world would soon disappear, and the remainder would be so divided and subdivided as scarcely to be felt. And we should make our way on to heaven, forgetful that we were the inhabitants of a world that God has cursed. But if, instead of this, we employ ourselves in the work of mutual crimination and torture, we have none to blame but ourselves, if we wade to the grave in tears, and find it an avenue to the bottomless pit.

SERMON XXIV.

HEAVEN'S CURE FOR THE PLAGUES OF SIN.—No. II.

Romans xiii. 8.

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another.

I HAVE sometimes thought with myself, what must be the sensations of the heathen, on observing the conduct of this world's population. They have no Bible to tell them the story of the apostacy, or to teach them the way of recovery. They see about them beings wholly depraved, exerting themselves to deceive, betray, and ruin each other. And they know not of any other life where the wrongs of the present can be rectified. The grave is to them an eternal sleep. And whether there be any God, to witness the events that pass, must demand a doubt. How deplorable, to beings thus benighted, must be the condition of the human family, and how often must they give utterance to the wish, that they had died the first hour they came into life.

Even with the Bible in our hands, and all these mysteries explained, we sometimes wonder that God would build a world and then suffer it to become so ruined. And still we can have no fear but that it will appear at last that God has done all things well. It is not his purpose that this world shall always exhibit the same gloomy and forbidding view as at present. During the period of millennial glory there will be, if not a universal holiness, at least such a prevalence of piety as will give this world a regenerated aspect. To this day God's people have looked by faith these many thousand years. But is it not to be feared that we have considered it too

remote, and have exerted too little agency in hastening its coming? We have *believed* and *prayed*, and have considered this the whole of our duty, while it should be our care to cultivate a little spot in the wastes of sin, and as soon as possible remove from that spot the whole of the curse. Let there prevail the benevolence enjoined in the text, and the face of the moral world will immediately be changed. Let the contest be which will do the most to render others happy, and the millennial year has come. I attempted in a previous discourse to explain the nature of benevolence, to show how it will operate, and urge the duty. I observed that we are obligated to feel kindly to all men by the *example* of God, by his *command*, and by the *happiness* which the *exercise affords* to its possessors. I notice,

IV. The *happiness it communicates to others*. I am aware that there must be in the heart, a wish to communicate joy to others; in other words, there must be some portion of the very benevolence recommended, in order that the motive now presented should operate. But this is true of all motives, except such as address themselves to the selfish feelings. The man who is wholly unsanctified will not regard the example or the authority of God. But we always address the motives of the gospel to affections that do not exist till God produces them, and still we hope that God will give the word success. I would then urge all the believers and the unbelievers to love their fellow-men, from the fact that by putting forth this affection you can create a world of happiness.

In the first place, look about you and see what need there is of more happiness than at present exists, what abundant opportunity there is for your exertion. You

cannot be ignorant that you live in a ruined world, where, if you are disposed to be kind, you can find abundant employment. You can find misery in almost every shape and shade. You meet with the poor, the ignorant, and the vicious. Some have no bread, some no Bible, and others, I had almost said no Sabbath, no gospel, and no conscience. There are some who pay no regard to divine institutions, and seldom or never visit the sanctuary. There are feuds and contentions and alienations and enmity. There are families where there is no domestic happiness, where there are neither smiles nor songs, nor pleasant words, nor kind affections. The husband and the wife, whom God has constituted one flesh, live in a state of utter alienation. The children are rude and ignorant, and the parents perhaps intemperate and harsh, and profane and false.

And you can find families who are at war with each other, who are stationed side by side, but through all the year have no interchange of kind offices. There, too, are the rich who have become poor, the respectable who have lost their character, the decent who have become intemperate, the civil who have become profane, and the pure who have become lewd. You can easily meet with the captious, the rude, the passionate, the deceitful, the false, the idle, the covetous, the extortionate, the insubordinate, and the quarrelsome. Ask one man his opinion of his neighbours, and he will bring a charge against some of them, ask another and he will accuse the first, and a third the second, and a fourth the third, and finally, if you believe nothing, you will say with David, that all men are liars, and if you believe it all, you will fancy yourself associated with a community of convicts. How common are contentions, quarrels, law-

suits, and disappointments, and vexations. How few men will you find who know of none of whom they wish to speak unkindly, none who have wronged them, none who defame them, none who hate them, none who envy them.

But I presume enough has been said to remind you that you live in a world where there is need enough of your benevolence. Nor will you presume that this picture is darker than the truth. The fact is, it would fill a volume to tell the whole. I have only glanced at the subject with a view to show you a little section of the field which your benevolence should cultivate. Would it not be desirable to apply a remedy if you might to this complicated malady. Be willing, then, to practice the benevolence required, and the remedy is applied and the cure effected. I cannot fix my eye upon any item in this catalogue of miseries, but I instinctively recur to the men who could reach a cure to the very case. If I think of the suffering poor, there are those at hand who have all the wealth necessary for their relief. Nor is there any quarrel, but there are those who could still it; or litigation, but there are those who could stop it; or mistake, but there are those who could rectify it; or injury, but there are those who could repair it. The profane man has some who countenance, and, if they were disposed, could silence him; the intemperate have such about them who aid and encourage them, and there are those who, exerting their influence could reform them. Let us look at this case a moment. Once suppose that every mind, but that of the drunkard himself, was suitably impressed with the danger and the misery of his course, and that no one would put the cup in his hand any sooner than he would present him the knife

with which he intended to slay himself, tell me if it is at all probable that he would ever be again intoxicated? No, when decent men shall know their duty and do it, when they shall watch the drunkard as they would the man who was meditating suicide, and stand between the one and the cup, as they would between the other and the knife, and risk their very limbs to save him, this dreadful avenue of death is closed, and there is not a single drunkard to curse society. And there would thus disappear in an hour, at least half the plagues that prey upon this world's guilty and infatuated population. And the benevolence which the text enjoins, let it once prevail, would accomplish this with promptness and with ease. The idle, are all within the reach of an influence that could render them industrious; the Sabbath-breaker, of an influence that could bring him to the sanctuary; the covetous, of an influence that could render them generous; the indecent, of an influence that could civilize them; and the captious, and refractory, of an influence that could render them manageable and civil. If you doubt this bring to yourself the case, and survey the circumstances. First name the evil,—then the two, or the four, or the ten, as it may be, who support it. Let these become good men, and the plague is cured. I know that if we were all holy we should be but men, and should be subject to many weaknesses, mistakes, and dangers. But cure once the miseries that sin produces, and God would remove the residue. Let him see from his holy throne the population of one town, bending every effort to cure its own calamities, and he would act as he never yet has, if he did not render the effort successful.

And does not the motive now presented, wear an enchanting aspect. I am urging you, my dear friends, to

love your fellow-men from the consideration of the good you could then do them. I look around me and see in varied forms a vast amount of misery. The view creates distress, and I urge you to attempt its cure.

Are you willing it should remain? Can you think of leaving your children to spend their life in the midst of it? Can you quit the world peaceably till what you can do has been done, to fertilize the moral waste, over which you expect so soon to cast a lingering, dying look. The miseries we contemplate are contagious, and may when we have done with life, enter our habitations, and prey these twenty generations, upon our children's children. If you leave one infidel, one profane man, one who is intemperate, one Sabbath-breaker, one scoffer, one disorganizer, unreformed, he may find access to the bosom of your son, may carry the pestilence into your house, may spread the plagues we contemplate through all the ranks of your posterity till they come down in a mass to perdition.

Would it not render you happy to die assured that you had been useful. If you could transport yourself to some isle of the Pacific, and by your influence and your prayers tame and evangelize its whole population, would it not seem a very desirable exploit? You may do all this good at home, and feel as joyous at last as if it had been done in the other hemisphere, and for another people. We have none about us who worship a block of wood, but we have no doubt many who are as real idolaters as can be found in the recesses of Tartary or on the banks of the Ganges. We have none who lacerate their bodies to fit themselves for heaven, but there are many who inflict upon their consciences and their peace, wounds deep and wide and incurable. We have none who *may not have* the word of God, but many who

trample its precepts under their feet; none without a Sabbath, but many who do not sanctify the day of rest; none who never heard the gospel, but many who never obeyed it; none without the bread that perisheth, but many who have no relish for that bread which endureth to everlasting life. Here then, on the hither side of every ocean, is a field where benevolence may operate in the cure of distress, and where it may achieve a conquest as valuable and as splendid, as can be won in any land or any clime.

V. I urge you to benevolence by one other motive, *the dying love of Christ.* It was in the cure of this very same distress, that he came in the flesh and died on the tree. He was rich, but for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich. He came to seek and to save them that were lost. His heart bled, it would seem, over the miseries of the apostacy. He felt a benevolence which to gratify, he let go all the honours of the upper world. He saw us cast out in the day that we were born, polluted, and in our blood; and as he passed by us, he bid us live. But he could only redeem us with his own blood. If he would be our friend, all the wrath which it became us to feel he must endure.

Now the same world that he pitied so much, we are inviting you to compassionate. And he declared himself our friend, while we were all his enemies. Probably some of the very court that condemned him, and the band that took him, and the guard that watched him, purged their iniquities in his blood. Hence, if men hate you it affords no reason why you should not love them. While we were yet enemies, Christ died for us.

Enter then upon the work of making your fellow-men happy, and you are in the very vineyard where the Lord Jesus laboured. He has already rescued from the ruins of the apostacy, a great multitude that no man can number. The work is going on, and he invites your co-operation. To be employed with him will be honourable, and will secure to you a share with him in the same victory, and the same awards. "He that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne even as I overcame and am set down with my father on his throne." It would seem that no one could resist the motive thus presented. By all that Christ has done, by every tear he shed, and every prayer he uttered, and every pang he bore, you are urged to spend your strength, and utter your prayers, and weep your tears, in the cause of the same miserable multitude. And they are *your* brethren, they were not *his*. I urge you, in the name of my Master, to love your own mother's children, those who are flesh of your flesh, and bone of your bone. You can meet no man but a brother, you can hate no man but a brother, you are invited to do good to none else.

And in the Lord Jesus you are not only presented with a motive to become benevolent, but you have a pattern by which that principle should operate. It is said of him, that he went about doing good. When the disciples of John came to inquire who he was, they were sent away with this history of him, "The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." Thus all kinds of benefits that he could bestow upon a miserable world he did. His main object was to save the soul, and here he bent his mightiest efforts, because here could be applied the most effectual remedy to the maladies he came to exterminate.

But he could see misery in no shape and feel indifferent. He took our sorrows and bore our sicknesses. His path was lined with the couches of the palsied, the decrepit, the miserable; and every where there saluted him the cry of some blind Bartimeus, "Lord, Jesus, have mercy on me." And he could suffer no such cry to be suppressed till the sufferer had come near and was healed. When there came to him the ten lepers, nine of whom he knew would never return to thank him, he healed the whole. The multitude who had gone into a desert place to attend upon his ministry, although they rejected the overtures he brought them, still must not be sent away till he had fed them. If any mother wished him to bless her children, they must open her an avenue to his presence. If one petitioned for the life of his servant, he must live. If even a Sidonian would ask his help, although it was not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs, and although he was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, still the veriest outcast must not go away from his presence without a blessing. Even the famishing and heretical Samaritan must drink the living water that springeth up to everlasting life. The very man who had come to take him must not leave his presence wounded; and the thief, who in the dying hour solicited his aid, must go with him to paradise. Into every ear to which he had access he poured instruction; every house he entered he blessed; and in every village, and every street, where were the impress of his feet, were left behind him the fruits of his benevolence. Tell me the single case where he withheld the blessing that was asked, and you may go and do likewise. If he would not grant to James and John the distinction they craved in his kingdom, that

being the appropriate appointment of the Father, still he would suffer them to drink of the cup that he drank of, and be baptized with his baptism. Thus there dropped from his hand, upon the beings that came about him, every variety of blessings. Who has not been impressed with the fact, that the very first miracle done in Cana of Galilee had respect to the conveniences of a marriage feast. He knew that if he should turn their water into wine, it would supply the deficeinces of poverty, render the host respected, and the occasion more pleasant.

Thus have we the very example we need. The benevolence which we are called to exercise must take the same track, must flow in the same channel. It will lead us, as we have the ability, to do every kind of good to all men; to supply their wants, heal their sicknesses, enlighten their ignorance, relieve their anxieties, awaken their consciences, and render smooth, and safe, and pleasant, their passage through this desert world. It will lead us to feel another's wo, and weep for another's misery. When the Lord Jesus approached Jerusalem, saw them about to reject him, and exclaimed, weeping, "O that thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thine eyes," how strongly and how strikingly does he pour out the benevolence of his soul. Thus we are to look over a world of beings that sin has rendered miserable, and weep as he did for the calamities that are coming upon them. And there is no man so poor or insignificant but he may communicate happiness. Let him add his weight, if it be but a grain, to the accumulating mass of public sentiment that is now attempting to put down sin and misery in every form and attitude, and he will not die till he has achieved

something that will tell to his credit in the day of retribution. Some field of labour will always open to the industrious if they will enter and toil.

REMARKS.

1. In the *want* of this benevolence, how strong is the proof we have that men are wholly depraved. It is common to find men who are willing to do good to their families and friends, to wish them prosperity and advancement, but if their kindness goes no farther, all is selfish. How few cast a look of sympathy over the whole surface of misery. This none do but believers, else others too would fulfil the law, and would be safe. Now men that cannot love their fellow-men, their brethren whom they have seen, how can they love God whom they have not seen? How can that heart be possessed of holiness that aches not at the miseries which sully this otherwise beautiful world? And how can the heart ache over woes which the hands are not employed in lessening or annihilating? Thus the second table of the law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," will be as swift a witness in the great day against the human family as the first. A totally selfish heart will find it as much impossible to put forth a benevolent affection toward man as toward God. In either case, it sadly interferes with our native self-supremacy.

2. We see the necessity that men should be renewed. Here lies our only hope that they will exercise the benevolence of the gospel. Till then they will fight and rage, and rave, will render themselves unhappy, and all others with whom they come in contact. Till then the war will continue in the family, the neighbourhood, the town, the state, and the world. It is a cheering thought, that

God has continued to us the means of curing that deadliest evil of the apostacy, a selfish heart. Without this nothing could have ever cradled the corrupt passions, on a larger scale or smaller, and this poor world could have hoped for no respite from the plagues that waste its treasures and its health, and darkens, to the blackness of midnight, its immortal prospects. O, come that day, when the chief physician shall ply his skill, and change the hearts of men, and thus cure at one wondrous touch their thousand plagues. In any world a selfish heart, the opposite of love, would render men unhappy. Place selfish hearts in heaven, and they would there be as fruitful as elsewhere in misery.

3. How pleasant is the prospect of a millennium. Then the benevolence we contemplate will become general. Men will be employed in rendering each other happy. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den." If by that promise that all shall know the Lord from the least even to the greatest, we are not to understand that every individual heart shall be made holy, still so many hearts will be sanctified that the prevailing influence on earth shall be a religious influence, and the paramount affection love. How easily then will all bad habits be corrected, how useless will be bolts and bars, and criminal laws, and fortifications; and how done forever litigations, and scandal, and alienations, and broken hearts, and ruined character, and bankruptcy,

and imprisonment. Then this world, so long a raging ocean, will become at length a peaceful pool, reflecting the image of its Maker. Then God will delight in us, and angels love to watch over us.

4. The subject will lead us to think with pleasure of heaven. How pleasant is the thought of being one day removed from all this misery, and of being where there will reign a universal benevolence. Every angel, and every redeemed spirit will be willing that other angels, and other spirits should be as happy as himself. And the grand employment of heaven will be to communicate happiness. God they will love supremely, but as God is infinitely happy, and will not need their service, they will no doubt be employed everlastingly in making other beings happy. Thus they will be workers together with God: for it is thus that God is employed, and thus angels. See them at Sodom, see them at Babylon with Daniel, see them at Bethlehem, with the sheperds, and in the garden with the agonizing Redeemer. O, it is pleasant in this dark and perturbed world, to have a heaven to think of, and a heaven to hope for, where there will reign forever an unqualified friendship, and our prayer, and our song, and our employ be the prayer, and the song, and the employ of all.

5. The subject renders a place of misery desirable. O, let these discordant passions one day find a world where they may live alone! If it does not comport with the purpose of God to eradicate them all, by sanctifying the hearts in which they predominate, let them be all congregated together, and no more disturb the peace and the quiet of those in whose hearts they do not reign. It is verily believed that when the whole design of digging a bottomless pit, and kindling a quenchless fire shall be known, and the beings judged who are there

congregated, it will be seen that the universe could not have been perfect without a hell any more than a town or county could have done without a prison and a gallows. And all the people shall say amen.

SERMON XXV.

THE NATURE AND RESULTS OF SANCTIFICATION.

John xvii 17.

Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was a perfect man. This we must believe as confidently as we believe his divinity, else we shall have confused ideas of many portions of divine truth. And as he was a perfect man, and would be in all things a pattern of what his people should be, he must have a perfect religious character, and perform the Christian duties as far as they would be applicable to his exalted nature. Hence, we often find him engaged in prayer.

Whatever difficulty there may be in the idea of a divine Redeemer's praying, the fact we are bound to believe. In his inferior character as Mediator, he acted by commission from the Father, and would take instructions from him, and put confidence in him. When the last scene was coming on, and he knew that soon he must hang upon the tree, he offered that memorable prayer from which the text is selected. He prayed most tenderly for his people; and among the first blessings asked, he prayed for their sanctification through the truth.

There cluster about this subject many interesting questions, to some of which I purpose to turn your attention.

I. What do the Scriptures mean by sanctification? Sometimes it means being set apart to sacred use. Thus

every seventh day is sanctified. "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it." Thus the tabernacle and temple, the priests and altars, and sacrifices, and all the sacred things of the Jewish dispensation were sanctified.

God speaks of sanctifying his name, which he does when by his judgments he rebukes the gainsayers, and stills their blasphemies. He thus convinces men that he is holy.

I could name many other uses of the term sanctification; but its principal use, and that intended in the text, is, in application to the work of rendering an unholy creature holy. Men are by nature unholy. They exercise forbidden affections, and do not put forth the affections that God requires. The prayer of Christ in the text was, that his followers, through the instrumentality of truth, might be made what God requires them to be; having the affections of the heart, and, of course, the deeds of the life, conformable to the divine law.

II. Another question may here very properly be,—When does this holiness begin? And the answer is obvious. It begins at the moment of regeneration. Till then, all the exercises are unholy; for "the carnal mind is enmity against God." Nor is there any degree of alarm, or any amount of conviction, that can generate one holy affection in the heart, previously to this period. Of course all the prayers offered, and all the exertions made, prior to this change, are unregenerate prayers and exertions. Nor can it be believed, consistently with correct Scripture views, that, anterior to this moment, there is any approximation toward correct feeling. No alarm, nor the most distinct conviction, can bring an unregenerate man to feel any more correctly toward God, or any

holy object, than he did in a state of carelessness and security. And although we would not pretend to say that the divine influence in the hour of awakening may not restrain the sinner, and hold him back from the blasphemous thoughts and affections which he might otherwise put forth, yet in all this there is no holiness.

And then it may be a question whether the sinner, under alarm, does not wax worse and worse, till the moment of passing from death unto life. If he has more light—if he sees more distinctly the objects of his implacable hatred, does he not obviously rise in his hatred, till it is changed into love? This point, however, it is not my object to press. We must concede that holiness begins when the heart is changed.

III. Is it always small in its beginning? Does that text in which the kingdom of God is compared to a grain of mustard seed, and that other where it is compared to leaven, teach us that grace in the heart is thus small at the first? Or do they illustrate the primitive smallness of the Christian church, and its ultimate growth and enlargement? They may be meant to apply in both cases, but aside from these texts, we are taught unequivocally in the Scriptures, that the believer is, at the first, sanctified but in a small degree, and that he "grows in grace" till he arrives at the fulness of the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus. He is, at the first, a "babe, and has need of milk, and not of strong meat." Afterwards. he "forgets the things that are behind, and reaches forth to those things that are before, and presses toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The light that has shined in upon him shines "brighter and brighter unto the perfect day." Hence, we gather, that though the work of regeneration

is from its very nature instantaneous, the work of sanctification is progressive, and is, at the first, comparatively small.

IV. But how will this comport with what believers have thought was their experience—that at the first they felt a glow of holy affection, which they termed their first love, which afterward they lost? And the Scriptures, they have supposed, favoured the idea. "Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee. the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown." But was that love of espousals, thus accredited to Israel, all holy love?—or was it not, in great part at least, merely that natural joy which might arise from the comfort, and pride, and novelty of their emancipation? It surely soon vanished, and they murmured, and made them gods, under whose guidance they purposed to return to Egypt. And that whole congregation, you know, died in the wilderness. They were, evidently, as a body, destitute of holiness; hence their love of espousals must be explained as something else than delight in God.

But why may not the same be said often of that joy with which the heart of the new-born seems to overflow? Can we be allowed to believe it is all holy love to God? There can be, as yet, but little knowledge of God, or of truth. Hence that strong affection can hardly be allowed to flow wholly from objects so dimly seen. Is there not often far greater probability, that it is the mere effusion of animal affection? Or, at least, that it has far more of nature in it than of grace. There may not seem, afterward, the same hilarity; but is there not more knowledge of truth and duty, and more stability

in the ways of God, more fixed principles of action, more humility, and more undeviating confidence in the Saviour?

In which position would the believer most readily go to the stake, and lay down his life for his Master? when, during the first month of his regeneracy, he fills the air with his song? or, when a few years afterward, he has learned the corruption of his heart, and at times, perhaps, hardly dare hope that he is born of God? May not the joy abate, and there be, at the same time, an increase of that principle of holiness that develops a heavenly mind? Surely it is the believer of continued experience, and not the man renewed but yesterday, that is rooted and grounded in the truth, and who cannot be driven about with every wind of doctrine. Whether this question is decided right, however, I wish each one to judge for himself.

V. Another question arising out of this subject is—does the good man at all times advance in holiness? and are we so to understand that text, "The righteous shall hold on his way"? Here, perhaps, again, it is not easy to come at what we are sure is truth. I have believed that it is otherwise, and that, while there are times when the good man progresses rapidly, there are other times when he makes no progress, and others, again, when the progress of holiness, if I may so speak, is backward. Thus Israel, sometimes, bent their track directly to the promised land, at other times did not move for many days, and at other times marched retrograde. So we have seen the plant spring up and grow as if life was in it, and then perhaps for weeks seem stationary, and then again withering under drought, and seemingly about to perish. Whether these analogies may teach

us truth or mislead us, still I have believed it thus with the child of God. And the only position contested, I believe, is, whether the Christian is ever in the way to do himself essential injury. That broad promise, "All things shall work together for good to them that love God," has been used as implying the negative. That the promise is true, and that the full import of it will be accomplished, there cannot be a doubt. But what is its import? Does God merely promise, in this precious text, that all *the events of his providence* shall conspire to bring his people to a higher seat in heaven? Or does he promise all this, and more too, that their very backsliding shall conspire to the same result? Would he promise, that if they forsake him, and sin by going after their idols, this very sin shall tend to purify them! Would it be safe to trust a wandering believer with such a promise in his hand? Is it reasonable to believe that it will tend to the health and growth of the heavenly mind, to have it wounded, and polluted, and ensnared by transgression? Have we any assurance that Peter and David might not have reached a nobler Christian stature, if they had stood firm in the hour of temptation? I confess, I think there is no such assurance.

Do not facts warrant us to believe that Christian minds of the same powers and opportunities, have made different degrees of advance in the ways of God? The one is seen to climb the steeps of Zion, with brisk and steady step, and far outgo the other, while to us there appears no reason why the other might not have *led* in the enterprise. The professor who comes at length to the grave in old age, and, as we hope, a believer, but who can look back upon whole years of relapse and of wandering, has he those marks of maturity, and that animating hope, and that strong and conquering faith, seen

in the man who moved steadily on in the ways of God, till his Master called him? You are thinking, perhaps, while you read, of two old men, contemporaries who died, it may be, in the same year, members of the same communion, the one having hardly deviated from the path of life an hour, while the other has seemed to be alternately a Christian or a worldling, as the times were. Now which of them seemed manifestly to fall asleep in Jesus, while the other was saved perhaps, though as by fire? You have all answered me. Pass through our churches, and tell me where is the venerated man of God, who is to the world around him a walking conscience, and carries heaven on his brow, in whose life there have not been some dark seasons of marked, and guilty, and hurtful relapse? Let me say, I do *not* believe that the Christian does make uniform progress in holiness, but does sometimes becomes stationary, and sometimes retrograde in the heavenly road.

VI. Are we then to believe, that while every Christian in heaven will be perfect, there will still be a difference in their Christian stature, and their amount of enjoyment proportioned to their industry in acquiring holiness in the present life? On this point there can be very little doubt. There will be a difference in heaven among redeemed spirits, as one star differeth from another star in glory. Doubtless God will have employment for them all in his kingdom. As in a building there is a variety of materials, places to fill requiring more and less strength, but all necessary; so in that mystic temple whose topstone is to be laid in heaven with shouting, Grace, grace unto it, there may be required, to give it its greatest strength and beauty, souls of very different capacities.

VII. It is then obvious that we are ourselves selecting the position we shall occupy in heaven, if any. On our industry will depend our growth; and on our growth our station in the kingdom of the Redeemer. And how can men be indifferent what is the position they shall hold among the redeemed in heaven! Increasing holiness bears its present fruits, gives its immediate as well as its future rewards. In what other enterprise, then, shall we be so ambitious to succeed as in this? If there is any one thing surprising above all others, it is that believers n Christ should be slow to put on his image. The Psalmist would never be satisfied till he awaked from death in the likeness of his Redeemer. There is surely no joy like that which is begotten by a holy temper:—hence, how can one who has tasted this joy, find any other pleasures, which, for a single hour, can become its substitute? Let me close by presenting a few motives to engaging with ardour in this heavenly enterprise.

1. I have hinted that we shall be *happy* in proportion as we are *holy*. We are mistaken in supposing that any particular circumstances are requisite to render us happy. There is but one thing requisite, likeness to Jesus Christ. And this is a happiness within the reach of us all, in proportion as we are willing to exercise his temper, and copy his example, and put on his image. Hence that rich and precious intimation, "Christ in you the hope of glory."

2. We shall be *useful*, other things being equal, in proportion as we are holy. No good man can be satisfied who feels himself to be living to no purpose. Find me the Christian who is never happy, and, sure as life, he is never useful. He is a cumberer of the ground, and can never reflect on the day that has gone by with pleasure. The man who is not aiming to bless his generation may

dig after comforts, but he can never find them. He may read all the promises over, day by day, but there will not be found a word of consolation for him. He might derive more from some act of real Christian benevolence, than he does from a whole Bible full of consolations: and to be holy is the way to be useful. To follow Christ has an eloquence in it that no exhortation, nor argument, can hold out. "Be ye followers of me, as dear children."

3. There is *dignity* and *character* in being holy, that nothing else can produce. What man is great, like him who walks in the consciousness of exercising the same affections that Christ does? In what matter should not men feel indifferent, rather than be willing to be losers in this mighty concern? How can it seem a small thing, whether we put on, or not, the character that glows in the view of heaven? the character that he wears who receives the homage of all the redeemed, and is adored by cherubim and seraphim? How comparitively trifling a matter is it, that we are honourable in the estimation of those who judge according to the outward appearance. The apostle could say to his enemies, It is a small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment. How noble his character, while he thus regarded supremely the inward adornings of holiness? Would we then aim at character—character that will stand the test when worlds are burned up—let us press on after HOLINESS.

SERMON XXVI.

THE MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION.

John xvii 17.

Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.

The grand purpose for which God gave to men a revelation of his will was, that the truth thus revealed might be the medium of their sanctification. It is hence spoken of as the sword of the Spirit, the Sanctifier. If it be asked, Why God does not make men holy without the use of truth, we answer, that he would not thus treat them as moral agents. There must be in that case a mere act of his sovereignty, and man become virtuous without design. Indeed, it seems to me to be keeping within the record to say, that men cannot be saved without a knowledge of divine truth, in consistency with the nature God has given them, and the heaven he has provided for holy beings. The very nature of holiness implies that men have felt the force of truth, and yielded voluntarily to its influence. To repent implies, that we see the truths, that the law is good, and that we have broken it, while we were under the most sacred obligations to obey it. And faith implies, that we feel distinctly the truths, that we are lost, that Christ is able and willing to save, and has warranted us to make application to him. Hence men cannot be forcibly made to repent and believe, not acting themselves, voluntarily, in view of truth, without an infringement of their agency. Or, rather, such faith and repentance, if we could suppose its existence, would not be their own act, and could not, on the Gospel plan, avail them to salvation. *Let*

us then inquire, how and why divine truth is used in rendering men holy.

I. It presents to view the objects of holy affection. To love God is a holy affection. But God cannot be loved, till men are acquainted with his character. In his word, his character is all presented. Had we no Bible, we might see his mighty power and Godhead in the works of creation; but only in the oracles of God do we see his whole character. There every attribute is written, and the full Deity made known. *Now*, if we have that temper to which goodness is lovely, we shall not fail to love him.

The complete character of the Lord Jesus Christ is, in the same book of God, revealed for our faith. We can see for ourselves, whether he has those attributes we can love, and is such a Saviour as we can trust in. There could be no faith in him without this delineation of his character.

The Christian character, also, is presented in the Bible, as the object of our affectionate regard. We there learn the divine law, and have opportunity to approve: and the same may be said in reference to every holy object on which God requires us to place our esteem.

And we learn, too, in the same book, the objects we are required to hate; for holiness consists in feeling disgust towards the objects of unrighteousness, as well as complacency in righteousness. There we learn the temper of our hearts, and all the moral wrong in ourselves that we are to loathe and repent of. Thus a primary use of truth in our sanctification is to present us with the character of the objects toward which we are to exercise holy affections, the objects we are required to love, and the objects we are required to hate.

II. Another use of truth is to present motives to the exercise of the right affections. The Bible amply assures us, that holiness is a lovely attribute of character. It is what renders God lovely, and angels, and the whole family of the redeemed. Hence holiness is indispensable to good character; and here is a motive to aim at a high standard of holiness.

The Bible assures us, that only where there is holiness there is happiness. This begets the peace and joy that reign in heaven; while its opposite has occasioned the ruin of this world, and the miseries of hell. These facts are so amply illustrated in the word of God, as to show the loveliness of virtue, and the hatefulness of vice, thus presenting us new motives to become holy. The Bible presents motives to holiness, by drawing out holiness and depravity to their final result in heaven and in hell. In the one world, holiness has produced its full effect in the everlasting peace and blessedness of its population; in the other, too, its full effect in the unspeakable misery of its hopeless inmates. Thus Bible truth presents men with motives to become holy, and being urged home by the Spirit of God upon the understanding and conscience, is the medium of sanctification.

III. As holiness must beget the love of holiness, it must also produce love to that truth which is the medium of its own production. The Christian, then, wishing to progress in that holiness which is begun in him, will be the friend of Bible truth, will aim to grow in the knowledge of it. As this is seen to be the medium of his cleansing, and as he now aspires to be clean, he must desire to know more of truth. All Bible truth will please him, for it all has one and the same effect, his cleansing. He will thus be a diligent student of the

Bible, and will never feel that he knows enough of it, while there remains in his heart or life one moral pollution to be cleansed away.

IV. It will follow then, of course, that the Christian who is a child in Bible knowledge, will be a child in holiness. To the same extent that he remains ignorant of divine truth, he will remain unsanctified; and men will learn, without inquiring of him, how much attention he gives the sacred volume. Apparent exceptions to this position are easily explained. We have seen men of small intellect and small acquisitions in science, generally, who yet appeared to be rapidly growing in holiness. In such cases, it will always be found, on a close acquaintance, that, though the man may have no general knowledge, he is daily conversant with the testimonies of the Lord. If one will learn *sanctifying* truth, he may become sanctified, though he may remain ignorant of other truth. We frequently meet with the contrast of this case; men possessing a large amount of general knowledge, but knowing little about their Bible; in which case there will not be seen much advancement in the stature of piety. If we are acquainted merely with men and money, though we may be acute worldlings, this knowledge will not tend to purify the heart. The knowledge that will render us holy is to be gathered from the word of the Lord. "Sanctify them through thy truth."

V. It would seem to be a truth unquestionable that the man who is under the process of sanctification, will have an increasing thirst for a knowledge of divine truth, till he dies. As the heart becomes purified, the love of truth, the means of its purifying, must increase.

And let the thirst for truth increase, and it needs no argument to prove that men will grow in the knowledge of it. We shall find, then, no believer who thinks he knows enough of the Bible, no man, however old, or infirm, or poor, or occupied, or neglected, if he has begun to be sanctified, who will not wish, by learning more truth, to nourish the spiritual life that is begun. More and more, as the cleansing operation goes on, and he feels the pleasure of being holy, will his mind be open to conviction, and the truth become adapted to his taste as the honey and the honeycomb. The love of truth, in the aged believer, becomes his strongest appetite. Old men are not accustomed, you know, to abandon, in their latter years, the objects of their appetite. How often do they rather become the slaves of some strong governing principle, which is seen at last to be mightier in death than ever! And in the man of God, who is struggling with his corruptions, and desperately bent on the mastery, the appetite for truth must be the ruling passion while his eye can see or his ear hear, or his mind perceive, or his heart and conscience be impressed. He will carry his Bible with him to his death-bed, and put it by his pillow, and glance his dying eye upon its pages, and ask the by-standers to teach him, and will be digesting some heavenly truth when life goes out; and the nourishment afforded his soul, by that last reflection, will add the finishing stroke to his sanctification. How can it be otherwise? Whomsoever it may condemn, though it tear from myself the last hope I have, still it must be true, that as grace advances in the heart, the love of truth will be enkindled. As there can be no natural health, and the body cannot be strong and vigorous after the appetite is gone; so is there no spiritual health, and the inner man is sickly and nerveless, where there is no relish

for truth. The case cannot be, where there is growth in grace accompanied with a disrelish for the study of divine truth.

VI. It would seem, then, that it cannot be a light thing to reject, or disrelish any doctrine of the Bible. Every doctrine must have its use in rendering men holy, else it had not been taught in that Bible sent to sanctify the world. God knew exactly what the case required, what system of truth the Spirit could use to the best advantage, in rendering the world holy, and this he has published. Hence, no part of it may be rejected as unwholsome, or innutritious. Suppose a table spread, day by day, by one who perfectly knew our constitutions, knew any disease that might be lurking about the body, or any danger of the season or the climate that needed to be guarded against, and we should presume to say, that one article upon the table was injurious to health, and never taste it; how exactly would the case resemble that of the man who imagines he has found, in the book of sanctifying truth, one doctrine of pernicious tendency. How arrogant, in the preacher of the gospel, to lay his hand on any doctrine which he may not preach, or any duty he may not enforce, or promise or threatening which he may not deal out to the friends or the foes of God! And how mistaken his people, who would have him suppress any paragraph, or hold back any doctrine or maxim of the word of the Lord! Who can judge as well as he who gave the word? Who, among the army that publish it, or the multitude who hear it, can tell better than he, what kind of truth is suited to the exigency of a betrayed and ruined world?

VII. It would seem, then, a matter of course, that

sanctification will be going on among the various classes of Christians, more or less prosperously, in proportion to the amount of truth embraced in their system. We may even determine, by this criterion, what denomination is built the most substantially on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. There may be in a human system *some* truth, but not the *whole* truth. There may be so much error as shall greatly counteract the effect of truth. The system thus made out may be *somewhat* calculated to sanctify; and yet not the *best* calculated. It may nourish a sickly and palsied religion, while it can never produce the strong, and vigorous, and useful man of God. It may contain truth enough to bring men to heaven, and yet never produce, to shine in the firmament of God, many stars of the first magnitude. In choosing our religion this one question should be kept prominently in view: which is that that makes the most enlightened, the most benevolent, the most holy and heavenly temper? for there we shall assuredly find the most truth and the least error.

VIII. Might not believers be sooner ripe for heaven? or, rather, might they not all be qualified in the time that God allows them, after their second birth, for a higher seat in heaven than they do ordinarily reach? Yes. They could learn more truth, could learn it faster, and digest it better, and grow more vigorously, and pass earlier the boundaries of Christian childhood, and thus arrive earlier at the fulness of the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus.

REMARKS.

1. May not that truth which is learned *before* regen-

eration, operate afterward to the forwarding of the believer in holiness? Yes. It matters not how early truth is known. Give it then a free entrance at the first opening of the mind, and pray that it may please the Spirit of God to use it for sanctification. The smallest lad in the school may be learning now what will be useful and precious truth to him, when he shall be shining a mighty orb in his profession, or afterward in heaven.

2. Is there not more hope, then, that the children in our Sabbath schools will be converted, than those who are to-day lining the fields, and fishing along the banks of the brook? No doubt. They will have treasured up truth to exert a sanctifying and elevating influence when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

3. Will not revivals prevail in the next generation, among a younger class of sinners than in times past? Doubtless. As we approach the millennium, and the Sabbath-schools shall have matured minds earlier for reading and reflecting, a younger and still younger generation will be sanctified, till our revivals will all be in the Sabbath-schools; and God will at length ordain praise, according to his promise, from the mouths of babes and sucklings.

4. And shall we not have then in our churches more active young men, and a race of fathers and mothers that shall shine brighter in the church of God? Yes, young men will be indeed "strong," and the patriarchal age will return, and every gray head will indicate the presence of wisdom and holiness; thus, there will be far more select and pure assemblages for the supper of the Lamb.

5. And will not this be then a holier and happier world? So the prophet sung: "The wolf also shall

dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them."

6. And will there not then ascend to God nobler recruits of the family of believers than in any of the ages that have gone by? Yes; new constellations will appear in heaven. And the various successions of the sanctified that shall then, at different times, come home to glory, will forever shine more brilliantly in the kingdom of their Father.

7. And can we do nothing to hasten on that day, and swell the halleluiahs of heaven? Yes; let us seize the dear youth or child, who a year or two hence will feel himself too old to be a scholar, and press him into the Sabbath-school and Bible class, and have his mind imbued with holy truth, before he gets that palsying maxim, "*too old.*" Let us all gird ourselves anew; let us cheerfully discharge every obligation; and let it be our holy ambition to share largely in the coming glory. *They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever.*

SERMON XXVII.

THE GREAT PHYSICIAN.

Psalms ciii. 3.

Who healeth all thy diseases,

This Psalm appears to have been a song of thanksgiving on being recovered from sickness. Hence it is full of those tender recollections that are prone to recur to the pious mind in such a season. "He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger forever." "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him: for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust."

With a mind filled with such reflections, David came with his thank-offering to God, and called upon his soul, and all that was within him, to bless that infinite goodness which preserved him in the time of his calamity. It is, however, quite immaterial on what occasion the Psalmist ascribes to God the praise of healing all his diseases.

In nothing, perhaps, can pious minds, see more distinctly the good hand of God, than in the plagues and pains to which sin has subjected their dying bodies.

I. Disease itself affords us one of our richest luxuries. This remark will seem more paradoxical than it really is. But I presume no one who has been laid upon the

bed of pain, will consider the proposition false. There are moments, when, as the poet sings,

> We shift from side to side by turns,
> And 'tis a poor relief we gain,
> To change the *place* but keep the *pain*.

In the attacks of disease, the jaded spirit is restless and perhaps rebellious. A day has sometimes seemed an age, and a night a little eternity. The sun has seemed to stop in his course, and the moon has delayed her going down. The index that told of the passing hours, seemed riveted to the point where it stood. But the paroxism subsides, and the pleasure then felt in a single moment, out weighs an hour of perfect health. To be able to breathe without a groan, is then more pleasant, than when one may wander the fields in May, and catch the richest softest zephyr that ever fanned creation. In these precious intervals, every minute gathers the comforts of an hour, and every hour the pleasures of a month. It is impossible to describe, to one who has not known the joy of a kind and timely release from the fierceness of disease, the exquisite enjoyments of such an hour. And in this we see the goodness of God. "Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." There may remain still great weakness, and much, that in other circumstances, would be called distress, but this is all forgotten amid the luxury of a temporary release, and a hope still better. One that has entirely escaped those severe attacks which immediately strip life of its comforts, darkens every prospect, and unhinges the mind from the pursuit of science, friendship, and piety, has failed to enjoy one of the sweetest repasts ever tasted, except in some hours of divine refreshment. Now, how

good is God, that, since we deserve and expect to be scourged, he should mingle, with the pains and miseries of the sick-bed, such high enjoyments! Should enable us to extract from the very agonies of a tortured body, high and precious delights! If I should look through the fields of creation, for some one high and paramount testimony of the divine beneficence, beside the gift of a Saviour, I should despair of finding one that would lead me more promptly to absolute assurance of God's love, than I am led by the seasons of gracious relief that *interlard* the agonies of the sick-bed. But for these relaxations from suffering, how soon would nature sink even by the slightest disease! How many days would one endure the unceasing rage of a burning fever? the perpetual throbbing of a mangled limb? the gripe of a cholic? or even the aching of a tooth? How soon would life go out in agony, with any disease that attacks us, did not nature recruit her strength, while the disease intermits its rage. A few hours, when the pains have been unceasing, have often brought to the sepulchre the very champions of our race, men who had seemed to defy death, in any other armour, but the forked lightening, or the eruptions of some treacherous Ætna or Vesuvius.

Now, God would have been good, if his judgments had not been so mingled with mercy; if diseases had never quit the contest till life was conquered, or the hand of God stayed the plague. Then the aching tooth had proved mortal, and an infection of the smallest joint had in a few days carried putrefaction to the very fountain of life. Hence, we can make no calculation as to the probable issue of any disease. If the disease makes its attack at somewhat distant periods, nature has time to

recruit and to heal, but if there be no periods of respite, the scene is soon closed.

II. We see divine goodness in *the efforts that nature makes to effect her own cure.* On this point, perhaps, the physician could instruct you more than the divine; and the fact is obvious, to every discerning mind, that nature is often her own best physician. Many of the remedies which ignorance prescribes in the hour of sickness and of death, are so many barriers to the speedy return of health. The limb that has been wounded by the luckless knife, would often heal in a few hours, if the wound could be bathed only with its own blood, and the severed fibres be permitted to join their wounded parts. How soon will the fractured bone join its broken parts, and become firm as before! How often will nature create some new disease, that it may rid itself of the dangers and the miseries engendered by some other! The palate takes disgust at food, when the stomach has lost its power to digest; and the food, if received, would endanger life. How often, when the stomach has received the deadly potion, which to retain would be quick destruction, does it exert all its power to cast back the poison and keep life in its seat! The very thorn that pierces the ploughman's foot, is thrown from its unwelcome bed by nature's own efforts.

Were I more of a physician, I should love to enlarge this article—it develops the goodness of God. Many are wounded when no surgeon is near; many are subjected to disease who are unable to employ a physician; and it often happens that he who should cure is ignorant of the nature of the disease, and plies all his skill to prevent nature from doing her office. In these distressing cases, it often happens that nature cures herself. She

attacks the disease, and, in spite of every hindrance, conquers and cures.

Brethren, when I thus speak of nature, I do not use that word as many do, who intend to exclude a God from his own creation. By *nature*, I mean the unseen operation of his hand who healeth all our diseases; I mean God himself, operating by certain laws which he has indented upon every part of our frame. The cure is effected without a miracle, but not without the finger of God. This we learn from the text. If we had to wait when attacked by disease, till some angel came from heaven with the appropriate specific, or till God himself spoke, as he did in Israel's camp, and bid the disease abate, we should be no more dependent than now on the immediate agency of God. This is the very thought of the text. David, when diseased, was cured like other men, by the laws of matter, and by human means; still he takes occasion to bless and praise Jehovah as him who healeth all our diseases.

III. The *great variety of specifics* found in every part of the creation, for the various diseases of men, speak the divine goodness. Probably there is not a plant or shrub that grows but yields us either food or medicine. The severest poisons are, at length, in many instances, considered the safest and speediest remedies. They have almost all become tame and manageable, and, like food itself, are hurtful only when taken without due regard to time and quantity. The discoveries of every year add new light to this interesting subject. The mineral and vegetable kingdoms are constantly pouring their treasures into the chamber of distress. And there seems an almost inexhaustible variety. Hence they furnish a specific for every disease. Even that most dire of all plagues, the hydrophobia, a disease which I can scarcely mention

without horror, is thought at length to yield to the virtue of one plant, very common in all countries. If the serpent bite, the remedy is found on the spot. If one plant has poisoned us, there is another growing by its side that can counteract its influence. In some instances, two of the deadliest substances are, when united, not only harmless, but wholesome. The same shower and the same sunshine caused the poison and the antidote to vegetate side by side. They grow like brethren, perhaps resemble each other, but one has the power to kill and the other to heal.

Now in all this, how good is God! He could have sent the plague without the remedy, the poison without the antidote. It would be our shame if we could withhold our praise, and yet live in a world so full of the glory of God, where every plant and shrub and mineral speaks his praise, and every disease yields to the specific he prescribes.

IV. It still is true that it is God who healeth all our diseases. But for that wisdom which he has given to man, phyiscians could never have known their nature, or the virtue of those plants and minerals which are their appointed remedy. And his blessing makes the means effectual. We can rely nowhere else. The physician often confesses that nothing operates as he expected. He fears he is destroying the patient he wishes to cure. And often, when his skill has failed, the patient given over to death, and the grave-clothes preparing, God bids the patient live, and he returns to health. Nor should it derogate from his glory, when he blesses the means, for, still, his own agency performs the cure. Hezekiah was sick unto death; a prophet of the Lord was directed to assure him, that he should die. But he cried and prayed, and a respite of fifteen years was granted him. The

event was now certain, and still a bundle of figs must be the means of his cure. But was it any the less God that healed him? Had the figs any power, independently on Him who had arrested the hand of death, and prolonged the life of the king?

The pious heart will have no misgivings on this point. Our life, our health, and all our comforts, are in the hands of God. "He killeth and he maketh alive, he bringeth low and raiseth up." It is good to feel that we are the creatures of his power; especially when we may hope, that we are the subjects of his grace.

REMARKS.

1. A period of recovery from sickness should be a season of praise. If we have misery in *prospect*, it fills us with pain; but we can *look back* upon a season of great trial with pleasure. The miseries we remember are gone by; in retrospect they are softened and are harmless. But we had died had it not been for the hand of God. We had never risen from that bed, we had never enjoyed returning health. The physician would have mistaken our case, or would have used the wrong means, or would have found his specifics to be the deadliest poisons. And we had forfeited our lives, and could look for nothing but ruin as our desert. And where had we been if the hand of God had not been under us? To what world had we fled while some friend was closing our eyes, how employed, on the day of our funeral solemnities? "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name."

2. The life that God has made his care should be devoted to him. And we have all an interest in this particular. If we have never known the attacks of disease,

it was God who purified the air we breathed, and warded off the pestilence that walketh in darkness. And if otherwise, if life has met with some interruption, and we have been called occasionally to the sick bed, it was God who healed us. In either case we are wholly the Lord's. Whether we feel our obligations or not, will not alter the case. God is good, and deserves our service, whether we think and feel, or are thoughtless and stupid. There is not one, among all my readers, that does not love and serve the Lord, who can escape the charge of being a wicked and slothful servant. God has made you what you are, and given you all you have. You live by his permission, and feed on his bounty. In these circumstances, to withhold your love and your service, is impious. None can be wise, and refuse to present their bodies and souls to him as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.

3. We see why many have praised the Lord upon the sick bed. It is not a place so destitute of comfort as many have supposed. The fiercer attacks of disease are separated by intervals, in which there are felt, independently on the comforts of religion, a keen and sensible pleasure, but when the heart is right with God, and these precious moments are employed in lifting a prayer, or a song, to his throne, I see nothing to prevent the joy rising to ecstasy. Even in the dying hour, the little lucid intervals of strength and reason, may witness joy unspeakable and full of glory. I do not deny that piety may operate even when the pains are on, and may even quench their fury by its ecstatic joy. But such is the immediate connexion between the soul and the body, that neither can suffer alone, nor the joys of the one fail to be interrupted by the agonies of the other. Hence how wel-

come to the mind that longs for communion with God are these little seasons of respite.

4. The subject will lead us to reflect with the Psalmist on the wondrous mechanism of our natures, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made, marvellous is thy loving kindness, O Lord." There is one noted instance on record of a physician who was an infidel, till he had occasion to dissect a human body. He then declared that he could be an infidel no longer; that he saw in the structure of the body the traces of the finger of God. But we may all know enough to make us ashamed of our infidelity, without the aid of surgical instruments, or operations. When we think of our bodies, how delicately strung, how easily injured, how liable to disease, and yet, ordinarily, how healthy and how firm, we can ascribe it only to God.

> Our life contains a thousand springs,
> And dies if one be gone;
> Strange, that a harp of thousand strings,
> Should keep in tune so long.

But when we rise higher and contemplate the union of the soul and body, and survey the delicate ligatures that bind them together, the mind finds an enlarged field of dignified and pious contemplation. The numerous inlets of pleasure; the varied appetites finding their full enjoyment in the temperate use of the good things that God has strewed about our path; and our varied diseases finding their cure or their alleviations, in specifics that grow under our feet, and in addition to these the pleasures of those very sicknesses that were added in mercy; how loudly do they proclaim the beneficence of God.

5. To be thankful, then, would seem a first law of nature. And to be ungrateful, a charge brought against

the whole heathen world, was adding as the last item to the climax of our degradation and ruin. A people *rational*, *sensitive*, and *immortal*, if they have no revelation of God, and no hopes of a future blessedness beyond the grave, should not have been pronounced ungrateful;—

"The brutes obey thy will,
And bow their necks to men;
But we more base more brutish things,
Reject thine easy reign."

SERMON XXVIII.

THE MAN OF GOD DEVELOPED.

John xv. 19.

Ye are not of the world.

It has always been the wish of the enemies of truth, to amalgamate the church with the world. They gain by this means, in their estimation, several distinct, and important advantages. Hence a gospel is current, that bends all its efforts, to do away the distinctions, between God's people, and the men of the world. The Christian character is let down, till all its beauty, and all its honours are in the dust. It is plead that the Christian need not differ widely from other men. He may retain his evil heart of unbelief, may pursue the world as he has done, may cultivate the same pride of character, may bury himself in scenes of dissipation, and may be, in all respects, the same man of the world, as previously to his hope and his profession. If he should sometimes be profane, and occasionally gamble, and be habitually hard, bordering upon roguery, in his commerce, and trifle with Scripture, and sing a merry song, or be overtaken by any vice that is fashionable, that is not low and vulgar; all this is permitted to affix no stain upon his Christian character.

He may be in full league with the guilty population of the apostacy, need perform no duties, nor embrace any doctrines, not relished by the ungodly, nor encompass himself with any of that sacredness of character that brings a sword. Thus the man of God is robbed of every feature of holiness, that can possibly distinguish

him from the mass of the ungodly; and the men of the world have only to adopt the creed, and make oath to the covenant, and come to the consecrated table, and the work is done.

They need have no knowledge of that new birth, which the Lord Jesus pressed upon Nicodemus; need not be translated out of darkness into marvellous light, and from the power of sin and Satan unto God; need not disturb themselves with repentance, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, nor exhibit that transformation of character which shall evince them risen with Christ, and seeking those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Thus the Lord Jesus is made to martial a band of miscreants. He has the attitude of a rebellious prince, who mingles with a multitude of rebels, enlists them under his banner, demanding neither loyalty nor duty, and winks at all the deeds of wrong and of outrage which they have committed against the throne and the kingdom. In pursuing the subject, *I shall give a Scriptural account of the secluded character of believers, and show, that their amalgamation with the world, would both injure them, and the ungodly with whom they are associated.*

I. *I am to give a Scriptural account of the secluded character of the believer.* Said an apostle, to those who believe in Christ, and to whom he is precious, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into marvellous light." And said another apostle, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and

what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you; and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." I have made this long quotation, because almost every clause bespeaks the secluded character of the believer.

Said our Lord to his disciples, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore shall the world hate you." Often did he say, that none could be his disciples, but such as would deny themselves, and take up their cross and follow him.

Now the very idea of a church, implies a secluded and peculiar people. Why have any creed, or covenant, or discipline, but that God's people must have a character, and perform duties, and sustain relationships, that belong not to the world at large. I know there is a sense in which they must both grow together until the harvest. God's people must stay in this world till they have ripened for heaven; but they may be in the world, and still be the secluded, and retiring, and peculiar, and heavenly-minded people, which God requires them to be.

Hence to amalgamate the church with the world, is to thwart the divine plan, and join what God has sundered. The purpose of God to give his people at last a world by themselves, and publicly separate them from

the ungodly in the scene of judgment, placing the sheep on the right hand, and the goats on the left; speaks plainly that distinctness of character, interest, and condition, which becomes them, and is enjoined upon them, in the present life. In no Scripture are they confounded with the unregenerate. Their distinctness is kept up, through the whole series of epithets given them in the book of God; saint and sinner, clean and unclean, righteous and wicked, holy and unholy, believer and unbeliever, godly and ungodly.

II. *The amalgamation of God's people with the world will injure them.* Men have shown great zeal in proselyting the world to a visible fellowship with the church, as if all that is desirable were gained, when men are brought to put on the garb of piety. But assuredly nothing is gained *to the church*. She receives no accession of strength, or beauty, when the multitudes of the ungodly come to her solemn feasts, and enter the enclosures of her covenant. The army of God that goes out to wage war with sin, and darkness, and misery, can operate with far more efficiency, when none are enlisted but the loyal. Permit the enemy to enter the sacred enclosures of Zion, and what can you hope for, but that in the time of the seige, they will betray her interests, and open her gates to the enemy?

It is when the church is pure as Christ would have her, that she can know her strength, and however small her numbers, can defend her interests and preserve her honours. But when polluted with a mass of unregeneracy, she is paralyzed and exposed. She moves to every onset, wielding a burden, that renders impossible every prompt and vigorous exertion. So the host of Gideon, while it embraced thousands who were afraid, could achieve

nothing. The three hundred when separated from the multitude, could do more than thirty thousand.

Our Lord preferred to be followed by a little faithful band, rather than an army of ill-chosen and ungodly men. He could have gathered into his church, if he would have lowered his requisitions, a mass of Scribes, and Pharisees, and Sadducees, and lawyers. Had he been less austere, to use the term his foes employed, he could have swelled his little flock to a countless multitude, and could have selected from them a soldiery, that would have made him a king, and built him up an empire Had he but proclaimed, that he would feed by miracle the multitudes that would follow him, he could easily have outnumbered the army of Xerxes, and could have obliged the world to do him homage. But his cause would have suffered, and he could no longer have said, that his kingdom was not of this world.

When the influence of Constantine poured in upon the church an unwieldy mass of nominal Christianity, the result was that the sinew of action was paralized. There ensued the dark ages, in which there was swept, from what had been the church, almost the last vestige of truth and holiness. There was more real light and strength in the camp of that little band, which fled from her sword into the wilderness, than was found in the whole catholic communion.

And the same will be the result whenever the same experiment is tried. Bring down the standard of piety till men totally depraved shall covet the children's bread, and you have perverted the whole design of a Christian church. The equipments of the gospel no longer adorn her soldiery, nor the Captain of her salvation lead her on to victory and glory. Hence the design to break down all distinction between the children of God, and the un-

sanctified, and lead within the enclosures of the church a band of God's enemies, is assuredly of all the intrigues of the prince of darkness, one of the most daring and desperate. While it pretends to strengthen the church, it makes a deep and broad incision in her arteries, and lets out her very life blood. While it professes a wish to beautify her, so that the ungodly are charmed with her visage, it does but constitute her an image of marble, cold, blind, deaf, dumb, and powerless. While it holds out a wish to guard her interests, to watch her gates, and man her fortresses; it does but covenant with her foes, and in the dark hour of midnight, while her watchmen sleep, gives the enemy possession of her towers.

The men of this world can never be the beauty or the strength of Zion. The Lord Jesus Christ will have a church, that puts on his image, and reflects his glory, that can be a nursery for heaven, that fosters in her bosom his own disciples, and will stand, *herself* a monument of his redeeming power. She is a city set on a hill, and her light must shine. She must have on all the features of beauty seen in her Master, and show out to the world every line of comeliness found in his image. There must be written on her banner, "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

And can all this be, when the church shall be composed of ungodly men? Will they put on the image of the Lord Jesus Christ, or act out the graces of the Spirit, or have any light to spare, by which the darkness of this apostate world may be illuminated? Can their science, and their courteousness, and their high sounding titles, become a substitute for the ornaments of the Spirit? Let monarchs come in with their diadems, and princes with

their trappings, and the multitudes of the learned with their philosophy, but who have none of them been taught at the feet of Jesus; and is the church thus made beautiful? Ah, it would depend on who saw her. She would dazzle the eye which could look only on the outward appearance, but would be deformity and corruption in his view who looketh on the heart.

What will the church gain then, when she has opened her bosom to the multitude? May the believer look for *individual enjoyment*, from being associated in covenant with those who are wise and honourable in this world? Will such fellowship ensure to him esteem and respect, from those who shall thus have pledged themselves to treat him as a brother? We answer, *no*. When the men of the world have put on the garb of piety, facts assure us, that they will by their ungodly conversation bring rebuke and shame upon the Lord's people? Believers will not run with them to the same excess of riot. Hence their scruples of conscience, which will still render them a peculiar people, will not fail to bring upon them the sneer, and the contempt, and the buffetings of the whole proselyted brotherhood. The stricter principles, and purer doctrines, and higher standard of Christian morality, adopted by the real disciples of the Lord Jesus, will be denominated enthusiasm; and whatever they may do more than others, will go to sink their reputation, and cover them with reproach.

What then are we to think of that gospel, so called, which aims at this monstrous confederacy? which would flatly contradict, or artfully neutralize, every requisition of discipleship in the family of Christ, and thus mingle the church with the world? On what page of inspiration shall we find the solitary text, that thus confounds the Lord's people with the multitudes that know not God

and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ? And who would venture to make such an experiment *on the life of the church*, unless unequivocally instructed from heaven? Alas, the experiment *has been made*, and *is making*, the divine authority to the contrary notwithstanding. Many churches are bleeding and expiring under the operation of this philosophy. It has polluted their creed, and changed their ministry, and robbed them of their covenant, and thrown open the doors of their fellowship to the wide world. The hedges of the vineyard are broken down, and the result is, that the boar out of the wood devours the vine. I proceed to say,

III. *That the men of the world are injured no less than the church*, by this promiscuous amalgamation of those who have no similarity of temper. Let me remark,

1. *A profession of religion increases the disposition and gives men better opportunities to do mischief:* and this, it will be acknowledged, is a curse, and not a blessing. I know it has been said that the enemies of the church may be restrained, by the gospel being so accommodated to their taste as to win them to its faith and its fellowship. Do away, it is said, those doctrines that they disrelish, because harsh and unreasonable, and those traits of Christian character that give offence, and they will all rush into the fellowship of the gospel, and be good and harmless Christians!

This point the history of the church shall answer. Judas gained admission into the fold, had access to the Lord of glory, and won the confidence of the unsuspecting disciples. But Judas was still a thief and a devil, and became the leader of that band, that broke in upon the retreat of prayer, and arrested, and bore away to the judgment seat the Son of God. There probably was

not another wretch in Israel, who could have pocketed the price of blood, and gone as he did, to seize, and bind, and sacrifice the Lamb of God. The foe had to wait, after he had whetted his teeth for the prey, till one, placed in the very presence of truth itself, should become sufficiently hardened, through its perverted influence, to administer the betraying kiss, and sell his holy Master. So Julian had done the church far less injury, had he not been nursed in her bosom. It was there his heart acquired that hardness, and his conscience that obduracy, that qualified him to be the patron of that gross, and God-provoking idolatry, which kindled its fires so zealously about the saints of the most high God, and sent so many from the stake and the cross to heaven.

Ah, and before we leave this bloody spot, in search of other facts, all establishing the same truth, I would point you up to heaven, and tell you, that devils could be made, only in that pure and happy world!! It was there, right where God and the Lamb are unceasingly adored, that the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, was schooled, and disciplined, and equipped;—for what? for the greatest usefulness, and the highest honours, like that of Gabriel, had he proved obedient; but becoming a rebel and carrying all his heaven-taught science with him down to hell; he was prepared to display a cunning, and a prowess, in deeds of wrong, that have justly drawn upon him the epithet of the *old serpent.*

You may now pass down, from the empyreal apostate, through the whole catalogue of baptized worldlings, and tell me if one of them was restrained by his profession, from doing mischief to the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. I know that their initiation into her mysteries,

and their unwarranted touch of her consecrated things, have led them to change their *mode* of warfare, and to attack her interests and her honours, in a covert and disguised assault, made in the night time, while men slept. There have been few open and avowed infidels, who have held their place within the enclosures of the church. But they have done none the less mischief, but the more, because they lurked in ambush. The foe who meets you in open day, you may vanquish far more easily, than he who comes under the covert of the black and dark night.

The thought I venture to urge, is, that the superior growth of depravity, acquired under the touch of sealing ordinances through the perversions of a deceived heart, have made men the *more inimical* to the church of Christ, and the *more desperate* in their attacks upon her interests, and her honours. Hence some of the worst of men have come from the house of prayer, where they had been familiar with all the hallowed objects of piety. No young men have sworn more profanely, or gambled more desperately, or abused the Scriptures more wantonly, or sneered at piety more contemptuously, than the wayward youth, who had been accustomed to bow at the family altar. Not that such cases are so common as the contrary; for a pious education, is the most promising path to heaven; but when they do happen, they are noticed, and afford us awful proof that truth perverted, is more deadly in its effects than error.

Tell me if God has ever directed, that the church should tame her enemies, by placing them in her bosom? Is it thus that we tame the viper and the asp? If such would be the course of wisdom, we have not done half enough. The church should have no enclosures, no

creed, no covenant, no watch, no discipline, no barrier that should operate to keep the vilest of men from entering her holiest places. Let us spread at once the net of a loose and superficial discipleship over the whole multitude of the ungodly, and thus, by a single effort, put a period to the church's long protracted conflicts, and save men the pain and the danger of doing mischief. But there is yet room to doubt whether God has prescribed any such means for taming depravity, or terminating the conflicts of his people; and whether the church has not by this time-serving policy, multiplied her wars and her dangers.

Why will we not look about us, and see what testimony our eyes will furnish us. Who are the enemies of the church in the present day? who lead in the attacks upon her? who unsettle her ministry? who dilute her creed? who abridge her rights? who rob her of her interests? who, by setting at defiance her laws, and drawing upon themselves her tardy and hesitating anathema, distract her peace? Ah, look once into the churches that are rent with division, and party, and strife; and tell me, if in each case there is not some son of Belial whom, like the serpent in the fable, the church had warmed in her bosom, but now has to feel the effects of his venom? Where in the churches is there division and strife, and hatred, and there is no *professor* warm in the quarrel? A single man, can go out infuriated from the sacramental cup, and spread a wider ruin than a score of abler men, about whom there have never been cast the sacred enclosures of the covenant. O, I wish I had not half the evidence I have, that I announce a solemn and sacred truth that ought to have been publicly announced far sooner. Whatever, then, a profession of godliness may do for unregenerate men, it does

not curtail their power or disposition for doing mischief. I remark,

2. An amalgamation of unregenerate men, with the church, *does not increase their means of becoming holy and happy.* No plea has been so popular, with those who have wished to push unregenerate men into a closer contact with sacred things, than that they are thus furnished with better means, and a fairer prospect of obtaining salvation. It has been the boast of some modern preachers, that under their ministrations, ungodly men are induced to quit the ranks of infidelity, and become Christians. They have skill it seems, in rendering the gospel palatable, and men will receive it from them, who would have perished, before they would have received it at the lips of a harsh, and homely, and unfeeling orthodoxy! Not to stop now, to inquire whether these converts are not rendered tenfold more the children of hell, than previously to their having been discipled; let me ask whether the means of grace used with them, are thus increased? and whether their prospects of heaven are thus brightened?

That same gospel, which would induce the unsanctified, without being renewed, to avow themselves believers, and thus teach them in the outset to utter a lie; would not be very likely to teach them much truth, after their being drawn within the covenant. And moreover, if an impression contrary to truth must be made to bring them to the house of God, or within the enclosures of a Christian church, it is very doubtful, whether they would afterward listen seriously to the truth. The same pleasant song that charmed them at the first, must continue to hold them, or they would escape like the bird from the grasp of the charmer. They must have a gospel as false throughout, as was that first lesson, that induced

them to quit visibly the fellowship of infidelity. And if so, they remain in all the darkness of their former state, with no more chance of being enlightened, than under the ministration of a Bramin, or a Mufti. Or suppose your polished and soothing preacher has done his part, and induced the infidel to abandon his creed, for some general confession of the truth of the Bible, its doctrines having been frittered down till he is satisfied; and he has exchanged the school of infidelity, for the church of Christ;—suppose this done, and the child thus born delivered over to be nursed, and reared, under a better gospel; let me ask, if that one fatal error, which he has adopted, will not operate like a corrupt leaven, to poison the whole system of truth. You may bring the man to the sanctuary, where is taught the faith once delivered to the saints, and chain him to his pew, and pour in truth upon his ear for half a century, and still you will never reach his conscience, till you make him feel, and he becomes willing to learn, that his heart is alienated from God, and that the profession he has made is a lie. You must teach him that the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint; that he is an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and is not, and never has been, in covenant with God; and thus at the very first push of truth, thrust him from his strong hold, or he stands shielded against any attack that can be made upon him by the true gospel. Thus in order to make him listen to the truth, or in other words, to furnish him better means of grace, you bring him up to the communion table, and when there you can make him feel nothing, till you show him, that the incense and the sacrifice he offers is abomination to the Lord.

It does seem to me that when you have made the unrenewed man a professor of godliness, you have placed

him where he cannot be taught the gospel. You have prepared him a shield for his conscience and his heart, that will effectually protect him, against any thrust that truth can make. It is then doubted, whether sealing ordinances are at all likely to become means of grace, to wicked men, who are admitted to those ordinances, while in impenitence and unbelief.

I take it for granted, what is too evident to admit a doubt, that a mere profession does not alter the man's moral character in the least. He believes no truth that he did not believe before, is as much an infidel as ever, and does no duty that he did not; unless you please to say that coming to the communion is a duty, and this we deny. To do so is duty, if the heart be right with God, not otherwise. Indeed nothing is done, that deserves the name of duty while God is not feared and loved. And nothing will be attempted to be done in this case, merely because God commands it, but all because consistency of conduct requires it. There may be some attempt at prayer, and greater punctuality in attending upon a preached gospel, but it must all be, from the very nature of the case, a *show* of piety. The profession has not altered the man, either in heart or conduct, enough to give him another character, either in the view of God or man. How then are his means of holiness, or his chance of heaven at all altered for the better?

Beside there is produced by attending upon ordinances, when there is no piety, a positive hardness of heart, and obtuseness of conscience, which tends to remove the man farther than ever from God. It is trifling with the most holy things, and the man who shall do this, must rise to a pitch of profanity and of daring, that cannot fail to beget an abiding insensibility. It is like the deed of Uzziah, king of Judah, who, for daring to assume the

priest's office, was made a leper, and continued so all his life. God will be sanctified in them that draw near to him. Thus are we driven to the conclusion, that when the ungodly come to the consecrated elements, their means of grace are *not increased*, while their prospects of heaven are *greatly darkened.* I close with one general

REMARK.

How above all price is an honest and distinguishing gospel. In the

1. Place, such a gospel *is the only true gospel.* My audience I hope are persuaded, that we have a distinguishing Bible. God intended, when he inspired his word, to give us, not the means of guessing at the truth, but of knowing it. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Hence he has made his word plain, so that the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err. Now we should depart from honesty, to either teach, or suffer ourselves to be taught, *indistinctly*, from this plain Bible. There must be some base design, when the truth of God, that stands intelligible on the record, is rendered obscure and confused in the lips of the publisher. The doctrines clearly taught in the Bible, must be made evident by the preacher; and the characters, there distinctly marked, not be by him blended and confounded: else we can easily be sure, that we have not before us the honest legate of the skies.

2. It is only an honest and distinguishing gospel, *that does honour to the Saviour.* Its grand object is to redeem men from all iniquity, and purify to the Lord Jesus Christ a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

The church it gathers, and feeds, and comforts, has on the image of her Lord, stands out from the world, an illustrious monument of his sanctifying power, and tells all the generations that pass by, how holy, and how glorious, and how mighty, is her Redeemer. Christ has declared that his people are like him, he is formed in them the hope of glory. But if you mix up the church with the world, and the people of the saints of the Most High cannot be known from the multitudes with whom they are amalgamated, and you call this whole mass *the church*, which is expected to wear the image of her Lord, then you grossly libel his character.

If the ungodly, as they look upon this church, are to learn from its character, what is the character of the Saviour; and from its conduct, what is the life and conversation he would approve; and from its temper, what is the Spirit of Christ; then is the Saviour degraded and abused by such a church, and the whole design of his mission covered with reproach. He came to save his people from their sins. Are these, then, the people he has saved? these worldlings? these profane men? these gamblers? these covetous men? these ambitious men? these proud, litigious, thoughtless, prayerless men? Are all these the saved of Jesus Christ? this the multitude that he has washed from their sins in his blood!!

Thus an indistinct gospel builds up a worldly church, and that church by its open, and barefaced, and abounding iniquities, brings reproach and contempt upon its Redeemer. But let the church be pure as he would have it, be composed of only such as will put on his image and glory in being like him; then the world will take knowledge of them that they have been with

Jesus, and he will be honoured in the house of his friends.

3. It is only an honest and distinguishing gospel *that will be useful.*

It gives men the means of knowing their own character. Its very first object is to distinguish between the clean and the unclean, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. Then the Christian discovers that he is in Christ Jesus, and takes the comfort of it; and the unregenerate learn that they are in the gall of bitterness, and under the bonds of iniquity, and feel the pain of it, and apprehend the danger of it. He will have many a song, and they feel many a pang under such a gospel; he may have high hopes of future blessedness, and they many strong anticipations of the wrath to come.

A gospel that is not distinguishing, by building up a worldly church, withholds from sinners one of the mightiest means of grace. There is nothing that so much affects men, as to see religion embodied, and acted out by the people of God. The gospel then presents itself to their consciences in a living shape, and carries with it an influence that is irresistible. There the law is, and there the gospel is, right before their eyes all day, in their houses, and in their streets; and they must die or embrace it. But under a loose and indistinct gospel, there is no such example, and of course no such influence exerted. If there should be some few in the church, who honour the religion they profess, which is not very likely under a gospel that does not feed them with the truth, still their influence will not be felt. They will be nicknamed, and despised, and cast out, as sour, unsocial and austere beings, of whom none may speak kindly, and with whom none will associate. Thus the

ungodly, under such a gospel, lack one of the most efficacious means of grace.

Hence under such a gospel there is no reason to hope, that sinners will repent, and turn to God, and live. Men will not be alarmed till they know their danger, nor will know their danger till they learn their true character. Hence under a gospel, that does not distinguish, that rears not a pious Christian church, that mixes up the Lord's people with the world, calls the whole congregation brethren, and deals out the promises without discrimination; sinners cannot be said to enjoy the means of grace, will never become alarmed, and will never repent, and will die in their sins, and where Christ is they can never come.

To the people of God, who are under a process of sanctification through the truth, it is of unspeakable importance that they enjoy a distinguishing gospel. Else they will ripen but slowly for heaven, will not enjoy the comforts of religion, nor be extensively useful. To place them under a tame and temporizing gospel, is like the attempt to grow plants in the shade. They may just live, but they can neither be vigorous nor healthful. Place the men of heavenly birth, where they can have the whole truth, and feel its influence. Then they "spring up, as willows by their water-courses." Every day advances them in the divine life. Their religion is healthful and vigorous, and there is reason to believe that they will feel the blessed effects forever. They will be, when they die, better prepared for heaven, will take a higher station, and shine more illustriously in the celestial firmament.

O, then, suffer not a Christian *for a world*, to spend his days under a loose and indiscriminating gospel. Advise him to sell all he has, and buy a better gospel, or

go where the truth *is* proclaimed, that he may daily feel its influence, "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Amen.

SERMON XXIX.

THE ENEMIES OF THE CHURCH MADE TO PROMOTE HER INTERESTS.

Isaiah x. 5—12.

O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few. For he saith, are not my princes altogether kings? Is not Calno as Carchemish? is not Hamath as Arpad? is not Samaria as Damascus? As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, and whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria; shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols? Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon Mount Zion, and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.

We sometimes discover, in a scrap of sacred story, a rich and lucid comment upon the essential doctrines of revelation. The simple statement of facts, dissipates the darkness that obscured the ways of God, and removes the cloud behind which roll the wheels of providence. Let us only read of what God, by his immediate agency, or by the agency of others, has *done*, and we shall find very little mystery in all he has *said*. The *doctrines* are nothing more than the general principles of the divine administration. The moment men put themselves in the attitude of quarrel with what God has *said*, they invariably tax themselves with the necessity of denying what he has *done*. The father who returns to his house, and finds his beloved child a corpse, and still denies the sovereignty of God, proves

himself a pitiable reasoner. A doctrine so pointedly illustrated, can no longer be matter of doubt, unless he choose to believe a lie.

The history of the Assyrian invasion, foreseen and described by the prophet in the text and context, is one of those expository Scriptures, which illustrate and confirm, what are erroneously termed the hard doctrines of revelation. God is here seen in the attitude of administering correction to his people, and using wicked men as the staff, destined like any other rod to be committed to the fire, when the children are reduced to obedience. If instead of intending to bless the people of God, they mean not so, mean no service to their Maker, but their own elevation, intend to injure whom they hate, all this does not disqualify them to be the sword of the Lord. There is something fearfully interesting in the divine sovereignty, thus illustrated by the very finger of God himself. We must either believe what God has spoken on this subject, or deny what he has done, and what he is doing daily before our very eyes.

I must detain you a few moments, on the historical facts in the case, and then notice more largely the doctrines they inculcate.

I. *We attend to the historical facts.* God had a church in the family of Abraham, but they were so wicked, that he styles them in the text a hypocritical nation. He would correct them for their sins, and would employ for this purpose Sennacherib the king of Assyria, the very staff they had leaned on. But that prince would intend no such good to the covenant people of God; his object would be devastation and plunder. It was in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few. He boasted, and heaven knew his impudence,

that his power was great, his victories numerous and splendid, his princes, monarchs, and the gods all too weak to resist him. And the worst is yet to be spoken, he threatened that he would do to Jerusalem's God as he had done to the deities around him. How contemptible must he have appeared to him who sitteth in the heavens. Thus the axe boasted itself against him that hewed with it, the saw against him that shook it, and the rod threatened him who lifted it up.

God now resolved that when he had chastised Israel for their idolatry, and their waywardness, he would curse the Assyrian for his pride. He might live till he had performed all the divine will upon Mount Zion, and upon Jerusalem, then God would punish the fruit of his stout heart, and bring down the glory of his high looks.

God would make him know that he was a mere worm, that an Almighty arm, and not his own, had gotten him his victories, and that all his wrath toward the people of God, must meet a final and a fearful judgment.

When God speaks in the text of *sending* that proud and impious man, to chastise his people, we are not to understand that God would command him to go, or justify the motives by which he would be actuated. God does not punish as a *crime*, the very deed which his injunction renders *duty*. It is believed that nothing more is meant, than that God would so order events, that the Assyrian should hope to gratify his avarice and his pride in humbling Jerusalem. The history tells for itself, that the king had one purpose, and the King of kings another, and that God kept his own purpose a secret from the miscreant whom he used as his rod.

Why was he not sent of God, precisely in the same

sense as God hardened the heart of Pharaoh? by the concurrence of events, that should have produced a contrary resolve. The Egyptian's heart was hardened by means that should have softened it: by alternate judgments and mercies, that should have rendered him one of the holiest men that has lived. So the Assyrian was sent, by an agency that should have rendered him Jerusalem's warmest friend. God had given him victory over the idols whose shrines he had assaulted, and made him rich with the spoil. He should then have honoured the God of battles, and should have come to Jerusalem to worship his Benefactor. He should have been content, when he had been suffered to spoil the temples of idolatry.

But these very successes made him covet the treasures of Jerusalem, and thus had the very opposite effect which they should, and *would* have had, upon a benevolent and holy mind. There is a parallel case in Jeremiah. The church had forfeited the favour of God, and must go into captivity. Babylon must lead them captive, and when Israel should be humbled, must be punished for making war with the people of God. Read the twenty-fifth chapter of Jeremiah, and you will have the facts in a shape more interesting, than that in which any comment can place them.

Thus God employs wicked men in the service of his people, while they mean far otherwise, and are in fact the agents of another prince. Still God holds them accountable, restrains their wrath when it will not praise him, and finally does his whole pleasure, precisely as though the agents he employed were his trusty and devoted servants. How calculated are such facts to beget respect for the character and ways of God! How

do they corroborate the doctrines of revelation, and humble the pride of man!

It is a solemn and bitter reflection, that the people of God must be so frequently and severely chastised. That God should term them a hypocritical nation, and the people of his wrath, and let loose upon them the armies of idolatry, to scatter and peal them. But God will assuredly take care of his own people, and though many may perish who profess his name; still where he has begun a good work, he will not fail to employ the best means and the best agents, till the work be consummated, and the happy subjects are brought home to his kingdom.

II. *There are several doctrines that these facts inculcate, which now claim our particular attention; each prominently suggested in the text.* There is an important sense in which unregenerate men are the servants of the most high God. He employs them to bless his people. They mean not so. While they are doing their work, God restrains them. When their work is done, as God intended it should be, he will punish them for not doing his pleasure from right motives.

1. *There is an important sense in which unregenerate men are the servants of the most high God.* This general truth is seen distinctly in the service done by the Assyrian for backsliding Israel. God would send him, and would give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

In support of the proposition, that ungodly men are the servants of the Lord, we say, *He gave them being.* He made all things for himself, yea even the wicked for

the day of evil. If men have become alienated in their hearts, still God is their rightful Sovereign. His propriety in them is original and unalienable. If they have entered into the employ of the adversary, still God has given them no discharge from his service. His right to them as his creatures can admit of no question.

And it will not be denied that men, however offensive their character in the sight of God, are dependant on him as their *Preserver and Benefactor*. "In him we live and move and have our being." Said the Psalmist, "The eyes of all wait on thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing" Thus wicked men are the *property* of God, and are *preserved* by him, two essential relationships between the master and his servants.

And he has occasionally *styled* them his servants. "I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, *my servant*, and I will bring them against this land." His *anointed*, and his *shepherd*, are terms which God applied to Cyrus. And he commissioned the prophet to say to Israel, "The sons of strangers shall build up thy wall, and their kings shall minister unto thee—For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish." Thus the world, from its crowned heads, to its meanest vassals, are constituted the servants of the church of God.

And *he assigns the ungodly their work*, as the master does the servant. The law of God, in all its minute detail, is the rule of duty to every ungodly man. And he has sometimes specified the service, which he required of individual sinners, still withholding from

them a knowledge of his purpose. Sennacherib must scourge the backsliding church, Nebuchadnezzer carry them to Babylon, and Cyrus restore them, and rebuild their city and their temple. Nebuchadnezzar was sent to punish the iniquity of Tyre, and was then directed to take Egypt as a prey. Thus have the enemies of God been assigned sometimes a specific task, as the master decides in what field each servant of his shall toil.

And God sits in judgment upon the service which unregenerate men do for him. I refer now, not to the last judgment, but to decisions which God passes, and punishments which he inflicts in the present life. Nor yet do I refer to judgments, which God inflicts upon the wicked *generally*, but to those instances when he has terribly reproved them, for not doing to his mind the very work assigned them. I shall notice here but a single case, Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, was the Lord's sword to punish Israel, and all the nations bordering upon Israel. So eminently was he sustained as the Lord's servant, to scourge the nations, that destruction was threatened to every nation that did not submit to him. And still, in peforming the very service for which he was thus made great, he so offended God as to render his overthrow as conspicuous as had been his pride, his insolence, and his oppressions.

I remark, once more, in confirmation of the fact that wicked men are God's servants, that *he rewards them for their labours.* For the hard service which the king of Babylon performed against Tyre, in which every head was made bald, and every shoulder pealed, he was commissioned to go and take the spoil of Egypt as his reward. Indeed, so extensively was that man employed by the God of heaven, to scourge the enemies of Israel, and his own church when they needed chastiseme nt

that there went out in his behalf this wonderful edict, "I have given all these lands into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him, all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come."—"The nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him, those will I let remain still in their own land, saith the Lord; and they shall till it and dwell therein." Even Israel was commanded, "Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him, and his people, and live." I will mention only one other case, out of scores that might be mentioned, where God rewarded a wicked man, for services done him. Jehu seems not to have been a man of God, but for the service he performed, in cutting off the house of Ahab, and destroying idolatry, his children to the fourth generation should sit upon the throne of Israel.

It is believed by many, that the promise contained in the fifth commandment, and all those which secure present prosperity *to the liberal*, are often fulfilled to ungodly men, who from wrong motives, have honoured their parents, or been generous to the church and people of God. Perhaps many a wealthy man in our land, who yet has no treasure laid up in heaven, has received his wealth of the Lord, in reward for deeds of kindness done his people, or exertions made to extend and bless his kingdom. With the measure they mete, it shall be measured to them again. If, without loving God, they will feed his children, and sustain his ministers, and spread his gospel, he will, without loving them, fill their barns with plenty, and cause their presses to burst out with new wine. It was perishable treasure that they loaned to him, in perishable materials he will reward

them a thousand fold. But the wealth he bestows, since they gave him not their hearts, cannot be acccounted a covenant blessing. It may be so abused in their hands, as to ripen them for an earlier destruction. May the mercy of a pardoning God prevent!

Thus do we argue, that wicked men are God's servants. He gave them being, is their preserver, and benefactor; has styled them his servants, has appointed them their work, sits in judgment upon the services they render him, and rewards them for their labours. I have not said they were servants in the same sense in which his people receive this appellation. Unhappily it is in a widely different sense. The one accomplishes his purposes with no such design, and is rewarded with the meat that perishes; the other receives the law at his mouth, does his will with design, and has for his reward the meat that endureth to everlasting life. I proceed to the

2. Prominent suggestion of the text, *God employs wicked men to bless his people.* If God would say to his church once, "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish;" why has he not thus published to the world a permanent and established principle of his government? And if *nations* hold their being and their prosperity, on the condition that they subserve the interests of God's people, why do we not infer with assurance, that *individuals* are under the same law? Hence all the ungodly, and especially those who shall die in their sins, live to serve the church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This subject is illustrated in the parable of the tares and the wheat; they must both grow together tilll the harvest. It is easy to see how grieved and injured would be many of the people of God, were not his enemies per-

mitted to live. Remove the wicked husband, and the pious wife is a widow, poor, and dependant, and exposed to temptation and reproach; while her children, the seed of the covenant, are perhaps removed from her, must be uneducated, be reared without the means of grace, and in a world, cold, and inhospitable like this, might be constrained to beg their bread. Thus the promise of God would come to the ground.

In other cases, one who is not born of God may be, as it regards temporalities, the support of a Christian church. His death might remove its faithful pastor, and the people perish for lack of vision. On the exertions of one wicked man may depend, in a variety of ways, the instruction of a vast number of the rising generation. God, then, will sustain him in life, and fill his storehouse with good things, and bless *him*, that he may bless others, and continue him down to the extremest old age.

It may happen that one who does not love God may be a valuable citizen or statesman. The pressure of government may be upon his shoulders, and a state or kingdom be greatly injured by his death, and ultimately the church suffer. Let both then grow together till the harvest. God has laid his plan, and will not abandon it, in which he has secured beyond the possibility of hazard, the best interests of his people.

We should have some difficulty in vindicating the ways of God, if the multitudes of the ungodly, especially those who at last perish, had no profitable employment in his world. A wise and good *man* would not make provision for the idle and the vagrant. He would be unwilling to foster inaction, or waste his property. Hence it cannot be that the blessed God, who makes the wants of a disloyal world his care, has not the wisdom to find

them employment in his house. Thus his known character gives us assurance, that he will not give breath and bread and raiment to beings for whom he has no service in his kingdom, and whose existence and agency in that case would but cumber and curse his creation.

Let us look at facts, and let them speak in behalf of God. They were doubtless ungodly men who built the ark in which Noah and all his were saved from the miseries of the deluge. Joseph's ungodly brethren raised him to that seat of honour and power which he filled in Egypt. The impious Pharaoh fed the church of God during a long protracted famine. The blood-thirsty Haman elevated Mordecai in the court of Persia. The princes of Babylon procured Daniel his great advancement in that monarchy. So the Canaanites lived and prospered, till they had cultivated their land, and made it fertile and beautiful for the comfort of Israel. They built cities, and planted vineyards and olive yards, and Israel eat the fruit of their labours. Cyrus sent back the Jewish captives to their land, and Darius contributed from his own purse to build the house of God, and supply the daily sacrifice. Judas marked out the Lamb, and the impious Sanhedrim, and the Roman soldiery put forth the decree, and built the altar, and slew the sacrifice, that atoned for sins, and procured the redemption of a world. The proud Cæsar reduced the world to one empire, that the way might be prepared to promulgate the glorious gospel of the blessed God. Columbus suffered every thing but death, that he might search out a place for the pilgrims, just at the juncture when they must flee or suffer.

I know that the wicked have sometimes persecuted the people of God even unto death. But this is still the

same service, as faith views it. When believers are matured for heaven, their death is precious in the eyes of the Lord. While men have forged their chains, and built their dungeons, and lighted their fagots, they have performed a service as necessary to the accomplishment of the grand plan of redeeming mercy, as when they have housed, and fed, and cherished, and comforted them.

Yes, from the time of Cain till this very day, wicked men have served and blessed the church of God. And the increase and the joy of his kingdom admits now a foreign agency, as readily as when Jerusalem was rebuilt, and the second temple set up. Men pursue their own inclinations, and do what they please, while God directs all their energies into the same channel, and renders them subservient to the interests of that blessed kingdom which he has established in this world. Not a muscle, a nerve, a passion, or a thought exists for any other purpose; or worm or sparrow perishes but with this design.

Many a foe of Zion, many who finally will have no interest in a Saviour's love, are employed in accumulating wealth, clearing forests, cultivating farms, and building habitations to accommodate the friends of God, in that day when the knowledge of him shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Hence we read, "the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just." And we read again, "Though the sinner may heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay; he may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.

Every storm that blows has its commission to bless the church, and every passion that raves the same charge. The revolutions that have been so frequent in

our day, so disastrous to kingdoms, ruinous to individual fortune, and torturing to the heart of sensibiliry, though managed, as they evidently have been, almost exclusively by ungodly men, and usually with the basest design, have helped to prepare the way for the heralds of salvation to carry glad tidings of great joy to all people.

That scourge of nations, and contemner of human life and human happiness, who lately died in solitude on one of the isles of the sea, though long the curse of Europe, and remembered with horrid interest by the millions whom his ambition bereaved, and immortalized by the rivers of blood that every where flowed at his feet, still wrought for the church of God. He gave popery a deadly wound, crushed the inquisition, avenged no doubt much of the blood of the martyrs, and though himself a tyrant, was the means of enkindling a spirit of freedom, which will, not long first, result in the downfall of every despot in Europe, and through the world.

The tract system, that mighty engine by which God is now promulgating the honours of his name, was the invention of infidelity, and was first used in corrupting the world with error.

The wise and discerning can see evidence in the events of every day, that wicked men are employed in serving God's people. When their treatment is unkind, it renders believers humble, watchful, prayerful, and heavenly-minded. Thus the promise, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake;" and another promise more ample yet, "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." We

do not say that Christians could not be sanctified in a world where they should be treated only with kindness; but we apprehend that in such a world they would ripen for heaven more slowly. They would be too well satisfied, and wish no other or better home.

Even the buffetings of the adversary have been made a blessing. Job was thus made a humbler and a better man. And Peter, when Satan had sifted him as wheat, was a more useful apostle. When John, in his vision, was questioned respecting some who appeared to be approaching heaven from this world, "Who are these arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" the question being referred, was answered, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." The idea distinctly conveyed is, that tribulation made them illustrious spirits. And we have all noticed, in our walk through life, instances of believers, who evidently were making great advances in the divine life, in the most adverse circumstances that can be well conceived of. When they have not dared to pray, nor attend a place of worship, nor enter into covenant with God, it has seemed as if every lash of adversity pressed them on toward their home in the heavens. We have admired the straight-forwardness of their course, when they have wet every foot of their way with tears.

Thus since the revolt in heaven, and the fall in paradise, devils, and those whom they have led captive at their will, have had employ in the service of God's people. Directly and intentionally, or otherwise, they have served the people of the saints of the most high God, and will continue in the service, while the earth shall remain, and there shall be on it a believer ripening for heaven. And God is so sovereign in managing the affairs of his

people, that he asks not the consent of the ungodly to be thus employed. They pursue their own plan, and he his; but whether they love or hate, are kind or hostile, their highest love, and their bitterest rebukes, achieve for the people of God the same object, and push them on toward their house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

3. *They mean not so.* It is very far from being the intention of wicked men to serve the people of God. So much may be asserted on the authority of facts, and what is more yet, on the authority of God. Sinners have one purpose which they intend to accomplish in every enterprise of theirs, and God another in the decree that assigned them that service. "Ye intended evil against me," said the injured Joseph, "but the Lord meant it for good, to save much people alive." Haman intended the ruin of Mordecai, but God purposed his high exaltation. The princes of Babylon meant the ruin of Daniel, but God would advance him to the highest renown. The infidels of France, while they spilt the blood of the priests, and confiscated their funds, purposed the overthrow of religion, but God meant a deadly blow at Antichrist. Voltaire contrived the tract system, to proscribe the Scriptures, but God designed the dissemination of the gospel truth. And when the wicked intention is *less* or *more* manifest, still the case does not widely differ.

It does not as we conceive prejudice at all the position we maintain, to allow, that there are individuals among the ungodly, who wish well to those who love God, and are daily employed in doing them kindnesses. The questions to be asked in that case are, do they esteem God's people any the more because of their piety, or less? or do good to them the more cordially, or the less

so, because they love God? Is the zeal to do them favours *increased* or *diminished* because they are partially sanctified? Men may continue kind to them notwithstanding their religion, and still be the farthest possible from intending to bless them as the friends of God. The most selfish motives may induce them to act: as the Christian may be the wife, or the husband, or the brother, or the child, of the unregenerate benefactor, and the instinctive affections do all we see done. And even then it is doubtful, whether there is ever a wish in the unrenewed to do them spiritual good, to advance them on toward heaven. I know of no authority, either from Scripture or fact, to warrant the supposition, that any believer ever had an unregenerate friend, who wished him to progress in putting on the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. What! wish a wider and still wider separation, and finally an eternal remove from them we love! urge them to depart from us, be more unlike us, and have less fellowship with us? and this because we love them! There would be something strange in all this.

Nor will it be any argument against the position, *they mean not so*, that men are not conscious of this operation of their hearts. The same heart that is desperately wicked, is deceitful above all things. Very few are conscious of hating the character of God, or his law, or his government. You may go to the careless, stupid, prayerless multitude, and only one in a thousand will confess that he hates God, and he rather because of his orthodox education, than his consciousness, and the residue will most of them be angry, that you should presume to charge them with a crime so monstrous. You may accuse them in the very language that God uses, of having evil hearts of unbelief, of being carnally minded, or of being dead in trespasses and sins, and if you

make them understand that all this implies, that they do not love their Maker, and his people, they will resist the imputation in the very face of this inspired testimony. If no charge may be brought against the unregenerate, but such as they are ordinarily conscious is true, we must either find them in a state of conviction, or may press home upon them no guilt of any shape or hue.

If then the doctrine may stand, it is but what every believer in divine revelation expects, that God will employ his power, to convert to the use of his people, what is or is not done with this view. He would not leave them in a world where, our doctrine true, there are so few to design their good, without some sure promise, that he will defend them, and will by all events, promote their present sanctification, and their ultimate blessedness. Hence the broad fields of promise. "The wrath of man shall praise thee." "He made a pit and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealings come down upon his own pate." What a keenness is there in that divine challenge in the second Psalm; "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." The address of God to the tempter soon after the fall, contains the very sentiment we enforce, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed." And said our Lord to his disciples, "I came not to send peace but a sword. For I am come to set a man at

variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." From language like this, with which the Bible is filled, we should seem to be justified in supporting the position, *they mean not so.* It is not the design of unregenerate men to bless, directly or indirectly, the people of God. I proceed to say,

4. While God employs wicked men in serving his people, *he holds them under close restraint.* Look at the fulfilment of the prediction of the text in the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of the second book of Kings. That prince *was sent* as predicted in the text, and his generals with a great army encamped under the walls of Jerusalem. There Rabshakeh, in the name of his master, insulted God, practised perfidy with the king of Israel, abused and ridiculed the people, and pretended to have a commission from God to destroy Jerusalem. Hezekiah committed the matter to the Lord, and in sackcloth appealed to him to defend his own great name, and save his people. And God, by his prophet, sent him an answer of peace. Said Jehovah of the proud monarch, who had come to wage war with his honour, "I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me." It was a moment of awful interest. Just without the gates of the city was a victorious army of nearly two hundred thousand men. *Now* it was that faith only could penetrate the dark cloud, that hung over the city and sanctuary of God.

But God had chained that impudent blasphemer to the foot of his throne, and he had now gone to the extent of his limits. When men, in abusing God's people, have enough of the fiend about them, to go on and insult

God himself, then his people are safe, for the divine honour must be vindicated, and God will do that himself, most promptly. I should be afraid of no man who would curse me, *and my Maker too.* I have then only to stand still, and see the salvation of God.

That proud man was in the hand of a mighty Conqueror, and here was Israel's safety. "I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way which thou camest." That night the angel of the Lord entered the Assyrian camp, and slew a hundred four-score and five thousand. When Sennacherib awoke, and saw his whole army dead corpses, he returned to his own land, and went to worship in the temple of Nisroch, his god, where two of his own sons imbued their hands in his blood. When men have blasphemed God, he can easily overtake them, and slay them. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." That impious man perished in the very temple of the god he worshipped. that Jehovah might doubly avenge the insults that had been offered him, on the idols to whom he had been compared, and the wretch who had defied his power. Thus God, while he had that blasphemer in his employ, was careful to hold him under close restraint.

We infer the same doctrine from the history of Balaam. He would have cursed Israel, because he loved the wages of unrighteousness. And he persevered in the design, while conscience, and the dumb ass speaking reproved his madness. But God loved his people, and although Balaam's success could not have hurt them, still he would not allow his impious maledictions to contaminate the atmosphere that breathed through the camp of Israel. After all his pompous efforts, he pronounced a blessing only, and the curse lighted upon his own

head. He perished by the sword, and went to his own place. *He* intended one thing, and *God* another, and he failed because God kept a bridle upon his lips.

So Haman was hanged upon the gallows he had erected for Mordecai, and the foes of Daniel were food for the beasts of prey that would not devour *him.* In the bloody scenes of Bethlehem, the very child escaped whom Herod would have slain, and the curse of God fell on *him.* If time permitted, I could swell this catalogue of facts, indefinitely, all going to show, how *terrible* as well as *sure* are God's restraints.

But his restraints are sometimes *merciful.* Saul of Tarsus is a happy case. He set out with the fury of a beast of prey, and dragged to prison and to death all that loved the Lord Jesus. At length he must needs go to Damascus, and try his zeal upon the lambs of the flock in that region. But he had now finished his career of blood, and the grace of God arrested him. It would not longer comport with the divine purpose to permit the prowling wolf to range among the sheep-folds.

And we could give you, had we time, more recent facts, of both descriptions, where *judgment* and where *mercy* produced restraint. Ask the ministers of the gospel, who notice and record such facts, and they will tell you of many a man, who raved against God and his truth, like a mad bull in a net, up to the time when God subdued him by his grace. Or they will turn over the darker page, and tell you of the *sweeps of death,* among the enemies of the gospel, till all your blood would chill. In some fearful instances, a whole gang of gospel opposers, infidel, and hardened, and desperate in character, have perished, in such rapid succession, as not to leave a doubt behind, *whether* God did it? or

why he did it? Men have found a grave *on the very day* when some impious vow against God or his people was to have been executed, and have roared upon their beds, when they have learned too late, that their sins had found them out. We might not *say* at their funeral, that they had gone to their own place, but verily we *thought so*, and trembled. We have seen them stripped of their property and their influence, at the moment when it was too evident to doubt that the interests of the church required that they should be brought low.

But whether the divine restraints are *merciful* or *vindictive*, they are *sure*, wicked men are governed by the same voice that controls the waves of the sea. "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." Till covenant love consent, the children of God cannot be hurt in their person, their interest, or their character, by the ungodly. A plan to injure them may be all ripe for execution, and is still as perfectly under the divine control as at any previous moment. Men may gnash their teeth, under the agonies of painful disappointment, and curse the hand that restrains them, but God will not be moved from his purpose, nor abandon one of his little ones, if he must destroy a world to protect him.

5. When their work is done, as God intended it should be, *he will punish them, for not doing his pleasure from right motives.* This doctrine is exhibited with the greatest distinctness in the history of Sennacherib. When the Lord had performed his whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, he would punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. So it was threatened Babylon that she should be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. And all the other nations which were the rod of

God's anger to Israel, and accomplished his decrees, perished for injuring the church. So the nations that slew the martyrs, although they fulfilled the purpose of God, are yet to suffer, and perhaps perish, for that sin.

And all the finally impenitent will go on accomplishing the decrees of God, with a heart that meaneth not so, and when their work is done, must perish because all their motives were wrong. Devils are doing the same thing, accomplishing God's design, without intending it. And now the question is, How is God to be vindicated in this procedure? We have facts in the case still, by which this question can be settled.

First, "he meaneth not so." There was no design in that proud monarch to do the divine pleasure; else surely he would not have so blasphemed the God he would serve. It never enters into the heart of the ungodly to do, what ultimately they will accomplish. And it is a maxim with men, and why not with God, that we deserve neither credit nor reward, for the good we do without intention. Suppose there operate no very *evil* design in an act that works our good, if there be the absence of a design to do us a kindness, we feel under no obligation for the good that is done.

In a dark and cold night, you call for hospitality at the door of some stranger, but you are denied lodgings, and come home, and find your house on fire, and extinguish the flames, and save your house, and your family. Do you thank that man, for the kindness which his inhumanity did you? Does he, on hearing of the event, feel that you are obligated to him? Or does he have but the deeper sense of his own baseness? It is then a plain case, that God can give his creatures no credit, if they serve him without intention.

2. A fact in the case must be noticed; "It is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few." Not only was there in the heart of the Assyrian, no good motive, but there was a motive positively bad; and still he did the pleasure of God. Hence, why should he not be punished? And why should not all ungodly men be punished, though it shall at last appear, that they have accomplished the divine purposes? "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." One gives you poison intending to kill you, but you have some obstinate disease upon you, and the poison cures you: is he the less a murderer? Was Mordecai indebted to Haman for his advancement, or Daniel to the princes of Babylon, or Joseph to his brethren?

Will it be denied that all unregenerate men act from wrong motives? Then assuredly their motives are either positively good, or neither good nor bad. But a moral agent cannot be wholly indifferent with regard to God and his law. There is no such being among all the creatures of God. Our motives in every action that may be considered *moral*, must be positively bad or positively good. Hence if you acknowledge that unrenewed men do not act from good motives, and this must be true or they are Christians, then they act from bad motives. "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil."

Thus every unregenerate man is thrown upon the very ground, where stood the proud and impious Assyrian. Not that every man is accustomed to sin with that boldness, or has so thrown off restraint, as he had; but there is in his heart, while God is rendering him serviceable to his people, the absence of a good motive, and the presence of a motive positively bad. And if we

allow this, we justify God in his dealings with the Assyrian, and thus approve of the principle on which the last judgment will proceed. I close with

REMARKS.

1. *The sovereignty of God, and the agency and accountability of the sinner, are associate truths.* In the passage we have contemplated, God makes a very bad man do his pleasure, and still pronounces him free, accountable and punishable, in these very deeds. Hence sovereignty, agency, and accountability, concentre in the very same act; and if compatible once, then are they kindred truths forever; and what God has thus joined, let no man put asunder. If Sennacherib could do what God intended he should, and yet act freely, and deserve punishment, another sinner *may*, and every sinner *does*. I will give you one parallel text: I could give you many. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." What, did God determine the deed, and still their hands wicked who did it? Just so; or the mind of God has been very unhappily expressed.

Do sinners still ask, "Why doth he yet find fault?" We answer, not because sinners do not accomplish his purpose. He never thought of bringing a complaint against them on this ground. He will take care that his purposes be accomplished. But he has still this charge against them *that they mean not so*. To please God, men must not merely do what he purposes they shall, but do it with an intention to serve and honour him. He has a right to the allegiance of the heart.

The meanest parent demands this, and thinks his child disobedient until he serves him with design.

2. *How wrong is that notion, that if the matter of an action be correct, it is of no importance what is the motive.* In the scrap of sacred history that we have contemplated, the whole result, *as bearing upon the agent*, turns on the motive. The Assyrian corrected the Lord's people, this was well; but he meant not so, and this was the source of his ruin. His motive was, butchery, spoil, and dominion; this brought the curse of God upon him. He might have corrected the Lord's people, as he did; and accomplished his purpose, as he did; and been now in heaven, if only he had *meant* so.

Thus is established a general principle of the divine government; the *motive* is the *whole* that God will notice. If men will be careful on this *one point*, God will provide for the residue. They need have no fears that his decrees will not be done, and that exactly as he determined; but the motives with which they are done, will decide the destiny of every agent employed, from the beginning of the creation to the last day.

3. *God did not create intelligent beings merely that he might destroy them.* His ministers have been represented, as making this assertion; or advancing sentiments that must lead to this result. Now the sovereignty of God, as taught in this discourse, leads to a directly opposite result. Here we see him employing men, of the very worst character, in doing good; makes them correct his people, and feed them, and clothe them, and sanctify them, and bless them. And if God can oblige bad men, who do not love him, to do him a service like this, and still leave them free, and permit them

to be as happy as they can be, and will at last merely demand of them that their motives were good, none but devils, and men desperately hardened, will complain.

They all have liberty to attach themselves to his family, and be his people, and be served, and be happy. But if they will not quit their sins, will not love the Saviour, and will not serve voluntarily, so good a Master, they must either do nothing. that shall turn to any good account, or God must employ his wisdom and his power to turn all they do into a blessing to his people; and is this a hardship? For my life I cannot see, that in all this God does the impenitent any wrong. Or would it make them happy to know, that on their way to perdition, they had done mischief that God himself could not repair!!

I should think from what I know of God, that he *would do just so.* It is spoken very much to the praise of Cromwell, that he could employ to advantage the vilest man in England. And it seems to me that every good man must be glad, as every angel is, that God has this power, and this wisdom. "And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up forever and ever."

If any would prefer not to serve as the ungodly do, while they *mean not so*, but prefer to do the voluntary service of a child, they may, and this is the very thing we wish and what God wishes. You need not build a Jerusalem, in which you are not to dwell, or a temple in which you are not to worship, unless you prefer the condition of a slave, to that of a son or daughter. You have but to come in at the invitation of the Gospel, and you may in an hour belong to the family of Christ.

God lets you do what you please. And if he turns your mischief into good, this cannot hurt you. Serve him willingly, and he will reward you, and love you.

O, can there be a fairer offer? can there be a kinder God than this? I should think devils would be ashamed to complain of this doctrine. I know it exalts God, but I cannot see, if the life of my soul depended on it, what there is hard, or cruel, or oppressive, or discouraging, in the divine sovereignty. If men choose to say, that God is not sincere in offering them mercy, and that he always meant to destroy them, after making them hewers of wood and drawers of water in the camp of Israel, and that they have only to *serve* and then *perish*;—if they will give divine truth this construction, and thus pervert it to their own ruin, we have only to leave them in the hands of a sovereign God, and rejoice that he is not the Jehovah they suppose him to be.

Finally, this subject must afford comfort to God's people. Here they see all their interests identified with the prosperity of God's kingdom, and he determined to make that kingdom happy, and employing for this purpose all beings and all events. If their enemies would hurt them, he puts his hook in their nose, and his bridle in their lips. He bids them "fear not," and has pledged his word, that all things shall work together for their good. He will guide them with his counsel, and afterward receive them to glory.

Ye happy believers, my soul casts in her lot with you. The God we serve is a gracious, and a mighty God. He rolls along the spheres, guides the events of every hour, manages the wrath of man, and the rage of devils, controls every storm, and directs the course of every atom. He is known in the palaces of Zion for a refuge, and his name is a strong tower into which you may run and be safe, whenever alarm comes over you.

It was in the confidence which this very doctrine inspires, that the Psalmist could say, "Though an host

should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear." A people so shielded, so served, and so beloved, can want only a song, equal to the gratitude they owe their Lord. They may keep at their Master's work, high in the confidence that he will never leave them, never forsake them. Amen.

SERMON XXX.

MAN HIS BROTHER'S KEEPER.

Genesis iv. 9.
Am I my brother's keeper?

THUS early did the apostacy of the human family display itself in murder, in falsehood, in supreme selfishness, and in gross and daring impudence. Cain, you know, had murdered his brother, and he now *lies* in the hope to conceal it from God, and impudently repels the insinuation that it was at all his business to be his brother's guardian. He would have no care of his brother; he might die or live, it was no matter that concerned him. His own interest was care enough for him; his brother must be his own keeper. This same principle of depravity, *supreme selfishness*, has ever predominated in the breast of the human family, and may be placed at the head of the causes that operate to make and keep the world miserable. Yet the question put to Cain implies that God will govern us by another law. We *are to know* what has become of our brother. His life and health and happiness is to be the object of our care, and that by the authority of God himself. As he would not suffer Cain, so neither will he suffer us to throw off this obligation. And what then becomes of the argument by which men quiet their consciences, while they make no exertion to bless or save the human family? When God shall make inquisition for blood, and shall inquire of us as he did of the first murderer, Where are all those millions of heathen that lived in your day? what reply shall we make? When he

inquires, Where are all those profane men and Sabbath-breakers that lived in your time? Where are all those intemperate men that came under your notice, and formed a character for perdition with your connivance? Shall we be able to wield successfully that argument of Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Or is there some other law like this, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's." Wealth is here added by the translators, but it applies as well to other things as to wealth. We are to seek another's health, and happiness, and salvation, as well as our own. "Whatsoever ye would that others should do to you, do ye even so to them."

Perhaps by *some such law* God will at last deal with us, and not by that contracted self-love which Cain made his only law of life and action. And if so, why should men act on a principle now, that must be abandoned in the day of retribution? One would not like to enter upon some litigated case, having planned his defence on a principle totally different from that on which alone his cause can stand. Wisdom would dictate a far other course. We are all looking forward to the judgment of the great day, and *it will come* whether we look for it or not, and God has given us the principles on which he will proceed. By these, then, let us prejudge ourselves, that in the great day we may stand.

On application to the law and the testimony we shall find that God has made us all our brother's keeper. And would we know who is our brother, the same book will bring within the circle of our brotherhood the whole human family. Hence the obligation to do good to *all men* as we have opportunity, will come down, a mighty burden if you please, upon all our shoulders. Cain defended himself on a spurious principle, and the judgment of God overthrew it. There is not, then, a man in our

streets but is obligated to look so far into his neighbour's concerns, as to know, if possible, whether there is not some good he should do him. God will not consider it a wanton interference, an abridgment of our neighbour's liberty, if we so far interest ourselves as to settle the question that there is no point in which we can bless him. Did we see his house on fire in the night time, we should haste to it, and burst open his door, and if he slept too soundly to be waked, should throw him out of his house, and none would consider it a gratuitous intermeddling in another man's matters. But the law of God does not say that we may interfere merely to promote his wealth. Can we in any point do him good? If so, the obligation rests on us.

Now apply this principle to the case of that multitude who are scorching up their vitals by intemperance. Is it abridging their liberties if we interpose? Can it be viewed as wanton officiousness if we snatch the cup from their lips? Suppose it a quicker poison that would take life in an hour, might we then dash the cup away? Suppose the father drinking it would poison and kill his whole family; might we then be so officious as to pity his wife and children, and rudely force the potion away from him? Suppose it a razor or a halter, instead of the cup, and you must become officious or his wife is a widow in an hour, and his children orphans; may you act in that case? Will one oppose the man who is opening his jugulars, and must be a corpse in an hour, and at the same time furnish the instrument to another with which he opens a vein that will dispatch him in a week? By what kind of consistency do men sustain this mode of reasoning? Does God see any difference in these cases? Or has mere human sophistry separated what God hath joined together?

Let us look a little while at the right we have, and the obligation we are under, to interfere in the case before us, and dam, divert, or dry up that flood of intemperance that is pouring desolation upon society. On this subject we claim in our favour every law of nature, of God, and of man. We claim the obligation of every law of kindness, humanity, self-preservation, and necessity. And we know of no law that bears in any shape upon our case, that does not declare most unequivocally our duty in this matter. Let us look,

I. At *the law of God.* Whether the divine law will be felt on this subject or not, its authority should be read. Many will plead that it principally enjoins abstaining from injuring our fellow men. We assert that it enjoins more, and renders duty positive exertion to do them good. "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." Here is authorized and even enjoined the very attack we would make upon this vice. And we have here the rule of our perseverance; we are not to cease while sin is upon him. "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others may fear." Here we are authorized, if the case requires, to make our rebuke loud and public. Good magistrates are represented as being a terror to evil doers, as enjoined of God to use coersion to keep men back from sin. The discipline of Christ's church is founded in the principle that it is right to hold men back from doing wrong by all the moral force that can be applied. The laws of Israel required even that men be held back from sin by the apprehended punishment of death. The parent must inform against his disobedient child, even when the issue must be that his child be stoned to death. The sacredness of the Sabbath was by divine direction guarded by

the sanction of death. Thus we sufficiently see that the law of God enjoins more upon men than merely abstaining from injuring their fellow-men, enjoins also the duty of keeping them back from sin. Not merely may I not kill, but I must hinder one from killing himself. Not merely may I not steal, but I must hold back my neighbour from theft. Not merely may I not, by any possible construction, put the cup to my neighbour's mouth, but must, if possible, prevent him from putting the cup to his own mouth. The law of God is not that tame negative, spiritless code that some would render it, but is exceeding broad, and binds to all those actions that comport with its spirit. There is no fear, then, that by any moral power we shall put forth in reclaiming the world from its beastly indulgences, we shall not be sustained by the law of God. We shall be condemned if we do not put forth such power by that very law. I remark,

II. That the *religion of Jesus Christ* embodies, as one of its first principles, the duty of restraining men from sin. It is difficult to view the operations of this religion as distinct from the operations of the law of God. Its uniform aim is, as far as it relates to men, to render them holy and happy. To do this it would enlighten the world; warn them of the coming judgment; exert all possible restraining moral influence over the wicked passions, and place before men every fascinating motive to flee from the wrath to come. The spirit of Jesus Christ characterizes this religion. He came from heaven purposely that he might throw himself between the sinner and the misery he earns, and thus block up the way of death with his own body and blood. And he stands and pleads with wretched men. "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments, then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness like the waves of the

sea." "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die."

The religion of the gospel is a benevolent religion. Its possessor is not content to be happy alone, but would extend his own enjoyment to the whole race of the apostacy; would rouse a dormant world from the sleep of death, and break them off from the habits that are destroying them. He has read in the sacred book that no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God; hence he sees heaven shut forever against the whole multitude, and nothing before them but weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Here piety becomes tenderly and laboriously compassionate. It cares for the sufferings of the *body*, but holds it to be an infinitely more important object to save the *soul* from death.

And there is one thought on this subject that has amazing weight. Intemperance excludes men, if not wholly from the house of God, yet very lamentably from the means of grace. Where is the intemperate man that has not vacated his seat in the church meeting, in the conference room, and in the place of prayer? Who of them attend regularly the means of grace, as those who hope to be sanctified through the truth? And they will be found to have commenced a very loose discharge of the duties of the family and the closet, if indeed these duties are not wholly abandoned? The Bible is read but little, and very few of its precious truths are treasured up, and reflected on and prayed over. The time that all these require is lost in unprofitable talk in the place of idle concourse. Thus all hope of heaven is cut off. The Sabbath becomes a perverted institution, and furnishes, instead of leisure to seek and serve the Lord, opportunity to drink and perish. Could you know the

true reason in every case why men desert the sanctuary, you would find in many cases, that the insidious practice of mingling strong drink, and the temptation offered of thus devoting the sacred day of the Lord unobserved by men, are generating this habit. That day when the last and best excuse that tipplers have for the practice, will not apply that it renders them strong to labour, is spent in beastly indulgences. Thus God is twice insulted; nay, three times. The body that should be the temple of the living God is polluted ; and he that pollutes the temple of God, him shall God destroy. The fruits of the earth, grown by the divine agency, are perverted from their benevolent designation. And the Sabbath of the Lord, made for man, to instruct him and fit him for the kingdom of God, is abused to a purpose more vile than any day of the seven. How God will feel while men thus employ the very hours he consecrated, in selling their souls into bondage to the devil, it can be easily conceived.

Now the heart of piety bleeds over the miseries that are coming upon this infatuated multitude, and all the laws of piety urge the believer to step in and stay the plague. I remark,

III. That the *laws of humanity* give us the right, and impress the obligation to be active in putting a period to the prevalence of this destructive vice. The intemperate man, beast as he has made himself, is still a brother. He descended with us from the same common parent, nor can we by any process of reasoning throw off the relationship he sustains to us. Could he be metamorphosed into a brute, and all the relationships that tie him to men be dissolved, when he becomes intemperate, the case would alter. Then humanity would make

upon us its smaller claim as when a beast suffers, or as when a serpent dies. Till then the claim of kindred calls for pity.

How ruined is the man who has accustomed himself to the artificial stimulus till the habit is fixed! The money that should buy him food and raiment, buys him disease and pain, and despondency. That labour that should earn his family reputation and pleasure, and health, and science, goes to pull down their habitation, and cover them with rags, and feed them coarsely and scantily, and plunge them from respectable life into poverty and wretchedness. The man himself is ruined; his health, his ambition, his intellect, and more and worse than all he can have no part in the kingdom of God. And down toward the same ruin he drags, with all the power he has, his hapless family. Suppose him to have a wife how altered is her prospect. She married a *man;* his face was human, his breath was sweet, his heart was affectionate, his countenance spoke the kindest emotions. He promised her his heart for life, and she gave him hers. But she now embraces a savage, and must wither under his insults if not his blows, and must sue a bill from him, or wear out life in the den of a tiger. And must see her children, the pledges of an honest affection, under the training of a brute: must know that little short of a miracle can rear them to comfort, or knowledge, or character. Her high hopes for them are sunk, and she becomes thankful if she may but keep them with her and furnish a rag to cover them, and a piece of bread to feed them. She must see her comforts all torn from her, the very bed she brought to him, and the conveniences her father gave her. She had begun to move in circles of high character, and had taken an elevation from which she must now come down. She

was the mistress of her house, but is now a menial. And all this, were it all, would be comparatively nothing. She must see her companion come down from independence to beggary, from reputation to neglect, from health and promise, to disease and gloominess, and death and hell. Once, perhaps, she hoped to live with him in heaven, but as no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God, she abandons this hope, and tries now to save her children. Here again her burden is a world. How can she hope to counteract the influence of a father's example, and unteach a father's precepts, and neutralize a father's influence. She had always told her children to obey their father, but if they obey him now they must die with him and be damned with him.

Thus she surveys her household with despair and sees not but that every star of her night must be covered with a deep and dark cloud. She was the mother of a promising family, and dwelt in a comfortable habitation. But her miserable associate involved his interest, and mortgaged his dwelling, and sold his lands, and gave up his business, and she must now try to keep herself warm in that darksome hovel. I see her, on some cold December's evening, returning from the wood with her fagots, that she may keep the life-blood flowing warm in the veins of her infant. And I see her little bare-foot lads trying to repair their father's wrong, bearing on behind her some brushes for the fire. Poor lads, they hope their father will come directly and bring them home some bread. Ah, he comes yonder, but has spent the shilling to glut his appetite, and another is leading him home. Go now and meet that abused wife at her door, and enter with her and take the inventory of her table, and if your heart does not ache, it is made of marble. There is nothing there to eat: if there is, the

mother earned it last night when she should have been allowed to sleep.

Go now and visit her father's house, and see how many comforts lay around her cradle; how overflowing is the table where she was reared; how full of all life's dainties that house where she, in an evil hour, committed her person to that being, who now holds her as with the paw of a panther; and then if there is anything you will not do that can be done to stay other wives from such a destiny, and other children from such a famine, then feel that you lack the common sympathies of humanity. What can possibly give us a right to interfere, and save a fellow creature, if we have none, in this case? Where can the laws of humanity operate? Might I tear that imploring female from the jaws of a wolf, or the mouth of a crocodile, or the rush of a cataract? And by what law? The law of humanity? And is this law so binding that I must even risk my life? Well, she may die a slower death by the abuses of an intemperate husband, but not a surer one; and her children may not as certainly perish as if already in the embrace of a bear, but the danger, if they are young when the father becomes a brute, is not much less imminent.

When, then, may the laws of compassion operate; when are they binding as the very law itself of God, if not in this case? To publish the tippler, or dash in pieces his bottle, or refuse him a shelter in your house, or employ in your service, are deeds direct of compassion, if by such means we may have the remotest hope of forcing him to the necessity of abandoning his cups. If we may not do this without intrusion upon his rights, then we may not cut the halter he is hanging on; may not dull the blade he has whetted to butcher himself; may not extin-

guish the brand with which he intends to set his house or a world on fire; may not seize the maniac and put a chain on him; may not hunt down the tiger who is lurking in our village for some hapless lad whom he may devour. To deprive him of citizenship, and put a guardian over him, and a prison wall around him, are the kindest deeds, if his beastly appetite has deprived him of the power of self-government. We should pray that the very same deeds may be done to us when we shall have unmanned ourselves, and rendered coercive measures of restraint indispensible. To all these measures the laws of humanity propel us.

Why have a prison for the thief and none for the inebriate? The thief is the less dangerous man. He will do his deeds in the dark, and will not contaminate our children by his example. Why incarcerate the robber? He but causes property to change owners, while the drunkard breaks in upon the more sacred compact of marriage, sunders the parental and filial relationships, and robs the domestic circle of its comforts. The highwayman robs the stranger, the drunkard his own family. The former takes the booty and is gone; the drunkard stays to rob again and again of every shilling that is earned by his family, or given them in charity, till he has stripped the bed from under them, and the clothes from off them, and the bread from their mouths, and stays not till, if possible, he has rifled them of home, and character, and hope, and salvation. Where then is the robber with whom humanity requires us to wage war rather than with the man who is thus spoiling his own house? I know not where that compassion has originated that will tolerate a man in plundering his own house, but will hang him if he forcibly take a dollar from the stranger on the highway; that will suffer him to totally de

stroy the reputation of his family, but will imprison him and fine him till he is a beggar, if he slander the reputation of your daughter; that will permit him to wield day after day the weapon of death over his own poor wife and hapless children, but will fasten him up with iron bars and bolts if he once thrust the knife at your bosom.

I believe our apathy on this subject a sin that the whole sober community will have to answer for in the day of retribution. God has constituted us our brother's keeper, and will ask us directly, Where is Abel thy brother? in a tone of remonstrance that will shake a thousand worlds. I will hint at one other law that binds us to assume this guardianship of our fellow-men.

IV. I refer to the law of *self-preservation*. I name this last, not because the most binding, but as that law which all men are least reluctant to obey. While we suffer the sin of inebriation to prevail, we are filling the land with *paupers*. Who are they that become a public charge? Why, perhaps nine times in ten, the intemperate, or their families, or their descendants to whom this vice has bequeathed penury. And who must be taxed to support them? Why the sober, civil community. From their table must go the bread to feed them, and from their forests the fuel to warm them, and from their earnings the raiment to cover them, and from their hearts the pity that relieves them in sickness, sorrow, and death. And the burden is increasing daily. Our children, if we train them soberly, may have to labour one day in seven to save from starvation the descendants of that mass of drunkards who now reel through our streets, and disturb the quiet of our evenings with their oaths and imprecations.

Ah, and more yet, our supineness is multiplying

crimes and criminals. Whence the murders that so increase in our land, till they have tenfolded since our recollection? Whence the growing insecurity to travellers, and the frequency of mail robberies? Whence that amount of theft around us, till every door must be barred and property watched with a sleepless eye? Whence the petty frauds in commerce? Whence the multiplied litigations, till some towns are about bankrupt through their influence? If the ninety-nine-hundredth of all this be imputed to the unnatural and monstrous use of ardent spirits, it would not come far short of the truth.

Hence the tax upon the civil community to prosecute and imprison that army of convicts which we do not assign to the halter? May we not then try to save our property? Must we levy a perpetual assessment upon our children's children, down to the end of time, for the support of every child whose miserable father shall please, by his vices, to place upon our charity? We have pitied the English nation while their poor tax has covered at length the whole produce of their soil; but intemperance is doing the same deed for us. And if we are not wise enough, I hope our children will be, to exclude this canker-worm from our entire territory.

In the mean time, intemperance is opening hard by our house a deep and dark gulf for our offspring. We intend to educate them respectably, and to hold them distant from the drunken and miserable community around us. But how know we that some incident may not throw down our children into this community? How know we that some son of ours, while in the field with a tippler, may not learn to taste the cup, and at length scorch up his vitals with the liquid fire? How know we that some daughter of ours, now sweet and lovely, may not at length come under the paw of some tiger-like ine-

briate; be lashed like a slave, and starved like a criminal, and thrown naked and exposed to the cold of winter by her inhuman husband? How know we that some large branch of our family may not become sunken down to proverbial meanness and degradation by this iniquity? and our very name be used, as we know other names to be, as expressions of all that is degraded and vicious, and improvident, and mean in human nature. In view of such possibilities shall we still adhere to the plea of that first murderer, "Am I my brother's keeper?" What concern of mine is it?

And who will say I have exaggerated. Have you not known some family that were promising to thus sink and rise no more? This subject presents the retailer of ardent spirits in a painful and distressingly interesting attitude. I address him in the next discourse.

SERMON XXXI.

MAN HIS BROTHER'S KEEPER.—No. II.

Ezekiel iii. 20.

His blood will I require at thy hand.

Is it lawful in the sight of conscience and of God, to vend ardent spirits?

EVERY man should be able to justify himself in the business he pursues, and when he cannot, by good and substantial arguments, should abandon it. It is a fearful thing to persevere in any course that conscience disapproves. There can be in such a case, neither peace with ourselves nor fellowship with God. Darkness, deep and ominous, must shroud our path till it is illuminated by the law of the Lord.

Can the vender of ardent spirits justify his employment? If he surveys the ground on which he stands, will he not become convinced that very soon it must sink under him?

Dear fellow-men, the Christian public has treated your case and character with great forbearence, because perhaps we had all been measurably in the same condemnation. *You vended* the poison, and too many of us suffered our money to buy it, and our families to use it. *We* approved of your offering it for sale, and you approved of our drinking it. Thus we fostered the sin between us, as in that noted case in Scripture applying to a somewhat different subject, "That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh and the judge asketh for a reward; and the great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire; so they wrap it up." The

importer and the distiller, and the retailer, asked a reward, and the mistaken community of purchasers uttered their mischievous desi , and so we wrapped it up.

When at length we began to wake to the subject, we could not *immediately* require you, at perhaps a great pecuniary loss, to quit the trade, till we had begun to practice some self-denial, and had abandoned the use. But if we are all under the same obligation to elevate public sentiment, the dealer must not continue in the trade till there is no one to buy, and then quit from necessity, else neither God, nor man, nor his own conscience, will allow him any credit. The reformation must feel *somewhere*, and at some time, your influence, or we shall fear that the enterprise was effected against your wishes. If you *will sell* the last gill you can, and make the last man drunk that will give you opportunity, and put in your purse the last penny that you can make the trade earn you, we shall doubt whether, if God had left it to you, the world would ever have been reformed. Part of the community, and we hope, by this time, the larger part, are mourning that you have not abandoned the trade long since; the residue may possibly hope you never will. In which of these divisions is there the most prayer? I think there can be little doubt. And you are choosing to which of these very opposite communities you will belong. Every prayer offered for the upbuilding of the church is against you, and so is every desire that the world may be peaceful, and industrious, and happy, and holy. And it would seem as if one would hate to pocket his earnings in the face of so much prayer.

You are aware that very few good men are now your customers in this article, and that the number is still diminishing. But this, it would seem, must give you ra-

ther a direful view of your calling. The *godly* may not come around you. It has been whispered to them from heaven, that they may not come into your secrets, nor join their honour to your tippling and drunken assemblies. You are employed, it seems, on the dark side of that line, that separates the children of light from the children of darkness. Your stand is at the *tap*, where you draw off, and deal out to the most ruined part of your race, poverty, and pain, and decrepitude, and blindness, and infamy, and despair, and shame, and death.

And *all this* is not *all*, for in addition to the present plagues which your trade inflicts upon men, it promises, assuredly, to undo them forever. It seals them over to the adversary, and confirms them the enemies of all righteousness, through all the future periods of their being. And what a horrid occupation must that be that so mars and spoils the works of God. What if the light of the last day should break in upon you with the cup of liquid fire in your hand, reaching it out to one who is at that instant hurried away to the judgment, to answer for the sin of making himself a beast at your bar, must you not follow on or go before him, and answer for the sin of vending the fire. Are you not the very man whom the Scriptures reprobate for putting the cup to your neighbour's mouth. If you will attend awhile, we will review the arguments by which you are sustained in the practice.

I. A vender of ardent spirits, on being asked why he continued in the traffic, responded, *I am sustained by the public authorities. They have licensed the trade, and I pay over to them a certain part of the profits. I can show you their hand and seal.*

But have they pledged themselves to answer for you

when God shall come and make inquisition for blood? and when the vagabond husband with his haggard wife and beggared offspring, shall cry to heaven for vengeance, on the man that pilfered them of bread, and clothed them with rags, and covered them with infamy?

I know they may have then gone out of office, and others may occupy their seats. Corporations, I know have their life time, and their office is temporary, and their account will be summed up in eternity. But do they incur any moral responsibility for the correctness of this enterprise? Will they stand between you and harm, in the great day of account? I know they have underwritten for your honesty and integrity, and for your good moral character, and have made oath to all these points, but as to the *lawfulness of the enterprise in the sight of God* have they underwritten here? Or have they left you to settle this matter with God.

And besides it is said corporate bodies have no souls. Of course they have no conscience, and will not come into the judgment, and will not be present to respond for you when you shall be charged with pouring a stream of death through the streets, and lanes of our beloved country. They will have sunk down into common men and will be judged not as public men, but as private citizens.

But to be serious, O what a day the *last day* will be, when every one must answer for the sins done in the body. But if the men who signed your papers shall be condemned with you, as guilty accomplices in your work of death, what then? Can you apply any remedy to the fatal and final mistake in that evil hour? I would certainly handle your conscience *kindly*, but I would do it *honestly*, because I shall be at the court on that day, and must be condemned with you, if I handle deceit-

fully the word of the Lord, or cry peace and safety when sudden destruction comes upon you. I would rather become security for every demand and every claim that may come against you in these minor courts, than answer for the charge of making one drunkard, or one homeless and hopeless and vagabond child, or one broken-hearted mother. I had rather be your city scavenger than your mayor or your alderman on terms like these. If the license you have, will be current only in a human court, and heaven's King will despise it. I would go and throw it down on the table of the corporation, and would go out, and before I commenced the sale, would demand a new revelation from heaven, that should contain at least a clause like this—*Thus saith the Lord, They who license others to commit sin are answerable for the sin, and they alone, and let all the people say Amen.*

II. Another, on being asked why he continued the trade, made answer, *That it was profitable, and that he chose to reap the profits.* Or as one might honestly interpret his language, he cared not whether it was right or wrong. He would have been willing if he might have been paid for his labour, to have manned the guillotine, or to have kindled the fires at the auto-de-fe. If he could make a good trade of it, would buy in the fagots, that were destined to be used in burning a world. But it is believed there are very few such men, so lost from reason, hope and heaven. And with this few we will not spend our time at present.

III. Another, on being asked, replied, *The trade supports my family*, and propped his argument by Scripture: "If any provide not for his own, and especially

for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." He faltered as he uttered the text, seeming to doubt whether God inspired it to foster the crime of drunkenness. A very simple comment would say, It surely must be of some consequence. *how* we provide. May a man *steal* his bread, and purloin the garment that warms his children? One may not provide for his family by gambling, nor by extortion, nor by robbery, nor by usury. By none of these means, is it believed that one could lawfully make the provision enjoined in the text. Thus the argument goes for nothing, if we are required to use Christian discretion as to the manner in which this provision shall be made. We may not do evil that good may come, unless we would have our damnation just. The *end* will not sanctify the *means*. That end which is not achieved by measures of righteousness, is not pursued with regard to the authority of God.

IV. Another trader replied, *This is the business I was bred to.* So King Alexander and the man of Elba, and Cesar and Sennacherib, were *practised*, if not bred to the art of blotting out nations, and pouring out human gore, and must be sustained in the trade of blood because they were bred to it. And Alexander the coppersmith, must oppose the gospel because else he should have no more shrines to make for Diana. Did he reason well, or did he probably loose his soul?

That you was bred to the business of making or vending ardent spirits, may involve your parents in guilt, but it cannot exonerate you from the guilt of doing what you know is wrong. It surely is your business to inquire whether your calling involes the good or the injury of the world, whether you promote its health, its character and

comfort, or its undoing. Whether you aid its population on to heaven or perdition. Are you exonerated from any such inquiry? You give us then the very answer that the highway-man will, I pursue the business I was bred to. And when you have answered his argument and persuaded him to be an honest man, I will use *your* reasons, and convince you that you ought immediately to attempt some other business.

V. Another retailer when inquired of why he continued in the trade made answer. *There is no other business I can do.* My trade in this article is my only path to competency. We may then surely ask you, whether you have *tried*, and settled the question beyond controversy, that you must sell rum or starve, that is, you must do what God forbids or die?

Here I would remark that one should not come to this conclusion till he has made an effort. It surely seldom happens under the government of God, that men can adopt no legitimate means of earning their bread. Should the gambler, and the actor, and the slave-dealer, and the privateers-man become convinced that their calling is mischievous, and ask God to direct them to an honest livelihood, would there be nothing they could do but die! Would he leave to beggary or starvation, the man who was devoutly praying,—"Give us in a lawful and proper manner, day by day our daily bread? Why, this question is answered in a moment. And were we obliged to answer in the negative, and duty was certainly associated with death, then we should say *die.* That man blesses the world and dies at a good old age who dies rather than sin. And as martyrdom has advanced many a cause it may possibly advance yet the cause of temperance.

VI. One brandy merchant, made answer when asked why he continued the trade, *That good men had employed themselves in manufacturing and vending ardent spirit, and still had gone to heaven.* That is, he would continue in what might be forbidden of God, provided it would be possible to reach heaven at last. Now we admit the possibility you plead, but we must tell you that good men in days past had less light on this subject than we have, and may have done in a measure harmlessly, what you may do unpardonably. What is comparative innocence in some circumstances may be the deadliest guilt in others. Had Paul done, after he was enlightened, the same things that he had done before, he had done them to his own undoing. And he assures us, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that he obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly in unbelief. Had John Newton, when engaged in the slave trade, been enlightened as he was afterward, he probably had never lived to sing as he did of the grace and mercy of God.

Moreover, no man in his right reason, would act on the principle here avowed. He would not commit theft, and robbery, and murder and adultery, because men may have committed these dark deeds, and still, perhaps, have gone to heaven. The very men I reason with, would turn pale to hear these crimes palliated by the same arguments that sustain the practice of vending this article of death. One may have done in his ignorance, even conscienciously, what to do now would cost him his soul. "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent."

Be it that there may be some good men even yet in the trade, one would hardly dare to sin, because good

men will sin with him. I would not engage in unlawful commerce, were it possible that an angel would share the profits with me. The rich man in the gospel had accomplished associates till the day he perished. The argument proves, merely, that good men may have mistaken their duty, or may have known their duty, and for a time, had not sufficient moral courage to do it. Could we know the views that such men will have of the traffic, when they shall see the world on fire, their views then might decide our duty.

VII. Another merchant was heard to say, *If I should pour upon the ground the store of this article, that I have on hand, I should wrong my creditors.*

Let me just ask that man a question or two. Did you purchase that store of provisions since you doubted whether the trade was right? And did you determine that you would sell it right or wrong? How then can you answer to God and your own conscience, for the sin of buying it? A mighty sin may have been committed before you come to the question of *selling*, I mean the sin of *buying*. If your own conscience met you, and the law of God, and poured their rebukes upon you for the sin of buying, you may so heighten the iniquity by selling, that God shall never grant you forgiveness.

And God may punish you in the very act, and cause the trade which you pursue with hesitancy and doubt, to conduct you speedily to bankruptcy. God will not, I think, if he intends your salvation, prosper you in a business that is keeping the world depraved. Is not such the character of your present customers, that you must needs be afraid of failure if you trust them? And then to be closeted with such men, as your business

now brings about you, how degrading, even were you in no danger from them. But should it be, that you have greatly offended God already by the traffic, the sale of the stock you have on hand in spite of a disapproving conscience, may remove you beyond the hope of forgiveness. At the most, you cannot calculate with any certainty that another month's continuance in the trade, may not undo you for eternity.

I knew the following affecting case, most intimately. A merchant had come to the resolve to make no further purchase when he had sold out the stock of spirit that he had on hand. But while he was doing this, his largest customer in this article became by the too free use of it, a blind man, and must now go sightless, groping his gloomy way to the grave, if indeed with the loss of his eyes, he does not part with his life too, and go down at last to perdition. Ah! what you ought to do with the stock on hand, would be a question easily settled were the world on fire, or could you see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven. If the loss of it, would render you a bankrupt, I know not that the case is altered the dust of the balance. Are you not your brother's keeper?

Money is not to be placed in the scale against duty, a moment. If the loss *would not* render you a bankrupt, pour it out; if otherwise, give it up to your creditors, and advise them to pour it out. And let it be at no hour of the day, nor day of the week, nor week of the year, nor year of time, when you ever embark in another recruit, and our prayer shall be that God will bless you.

VIII. But another dealer was heard to say, *If I do not supply the drunkard with the means of his own un-*

doing, another will, and I may as well have the profits as any one.

And would you add, I may as well be *condemned for it* as another? The dictate of wisdom is, If it would be wrong to do it, don't *you* do it. It is fearfully hazardous to commit sin, because it *will be* committed. Let them do it that dare do it, but let no one rush upon destruction with his eyes open. No argument has done more mischief than this, and yet none is more weak. Must I be willing to sin, and risk my soul, because somebody will sin if I do not? May I keep a gambling house because there are a great many people who will be inconsiderate, and become mad on the game, and will gamble, and if I do not provide them the means of their undoing, and have the profits of it, others will? Shall I go farther still, and keep that house which the wise man calls the way to hell, because if I do not another will? Shall I furnish daggers and firebrands, because men will be so depraved that they will burn houses, and I may as well have the profits of furnishing them the means as any one? Men will practise forgery; and hence the worthless Burrows, who sells well executed bank notes as pictures, to which any villain who has skill in penmanship can affix the signature, can offer a plea as good as yours in support of his calling. Somebody will print, and furnish notes for counterfeiters, if he does not. Ah! the argument proves too much, and so proves nothing. Will not God ask you in the last day the fearful question, where is Abel thy brother?

IX. I knew one merchant who sustained himself in the practise by the plea, *That good men should be the only venders of ardent spirits, as they will keep the most decent houses, and sell the poison most discreetly.*

It frightens one to bring up the conclusions that can be sustained by this argument. It would go to prove that every gateway to hell should be kept by an angel, not indeed to keep men from entering and passing that way, but to make men pass on to perdition decently. No! no! Highly as we respect and esteem some of the men who have been formerly employed in the traffic, we would, if possible, from this time, disassociate it for ever from character and decency. If the article must be sold for the use, and ruin, and utter damnation of men, *I would place at the tap the same lying serpent that handed Eve the apple, that it might appear the very infernal commerce that it is* The prince of hell would thus have opportunity to separate from his kingdom, all that is moral, and decent and healthful, and his empire be dark and dreary as he would have it. But you will say I am too severe. No matter, if I am only on the side of truth.

X. But a retailer says, *The importers and distillers are in fault, and should not furnish the temptation.*

Ah! it would, indeed, be very convenient for us, if other men would dam up the currents of death, and leave us nothing to do. It would indeed be a blessing incalculable, if the distillers and importers would stop their business, and thus quench the stream of liquid fire at the very foot of its Ætna. But can we not, and will we not quit sinning, unless the means of sinning are put out of our reach? Dare you not disoblige that portion of the community that ask you to kill them, and damn them? Do they so hold your destiny in their hands, that you may not hope to prosper without their friendship? Suppose our rich importers should bring in whole

ship loads of poignards, and place them on the side-walks of our city, and you should seize one, and plunge it into some human heart, would the court lay the sin, or any part of it, at the door of the importer, or would it sentence you to be hanged?

I know it would be very convenient, if we could persuade *other* men to do *our* duty, and stop us, when we will not stop ourselves, in the paths of unrighteousness. But we have no right to expect that reform will begin at this end. Men will stop manufacturing and importing, only when the trade is no longer profitable. While the trade is in the way to gain and wealth, there are men who would not abandon it, hardly if they saw the world on fire. No! public sentiment must be urged *up*, till there shall be none to drink, and then there will be none to retail, and then there will be none to import or manufacture. This is the order and the process by which all the good has been accomplished that ever has been done in the world.

XI. There is another reply that we have heard from venders that should not pass unnoticed. They say, *Legislators should, by heavy imposts and taxation, stay the influx and the creation of the article, thus cure the evil by drying up the fountain.*

All this is visionary. Till the people are willing to quit the use of it, and venders to dispense with the gains of it, our rulers know well that they shall lose their office if they meddle with it. It would be both convenient and desirable, and more yet, duty, that our civil authorities remove the temptation by legislative acts, and thus save us the labour and toil, of boosting public sentiment to accomplish the matter in another way. But a corrupt community under a government like ours, will

always have a legislature that live at peace with its corruptions. The men in office will duly represent their constituents, and wear, *at least*, all the vices prevalent among the people. Hence a good influence must travel upward, and reach the legislature by individual impulse.

As said already, *men* have consciences, *legislative* and *corporate* bodies have none. *Men* too expect a future judgment, but *corporate and legislative* bodies fear only a loss of their influence, office and salary. Vice may flow *down* therefore, but virtue must *climb*. When far more than a moiety of our population are strictly temperate, and have no interest to serve by conniving at lust, especially when the better part shall feel that their interest would be served by having the community temperate, *then*, it will be popular to legislate on this subject, and the authorities of our land will make whatever enactments we pray for.

Only let the people quit drinking, and the venders quit selling, and *then, when we stand in no need of their help*, our legislative bodies will be the perfect sycophants of the *temperate*, as they are, and long have been of the *drunken* community. Thus the destroyer will be strangled in his dotage, but every man of discernment must see that the power and influence that shall do the work, must be *individual*, and not legislative.

XII. But said *one*, (not the last by ten thousand,) my property is my own, and I will not permit my enjoyment of it to be abridged by your hypocritical and fanatical opinions.

Your property your own!! You do not mean that you created it, nor yet that independently of God you earned it, or gained it. If your wealth was through the products of the earth, it was God that sent the showers,

and shaped the seasons, and tempered the atmosphere, and grew your wheat for you. If it was through success in trade, it was God that lifted you up, that furnished you with the mind you used, and directed the gale that blew your commerce home, and stayed the storm that might have wrecked your fortune in a moment. If gotten by toil, then it was God that nerved the arm to labour, and built, and sustained every muscle and sinew that went to the work, and made the heart beat, and the lungs heave, and forced the life stream along in its dark and mysterious channel.

If you mean any thing that contradicts all this, your property *is not your own*, but the Lord's. The silver and gold are His. His are all the beasts of the forest, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. If we are God's stewards, and our wealth is his, we may not use it in contravention of his authority, and still expect that he will give us day by day our daily bread. He will rather blast us, with the breath of his mouth, and destroy us with the brightness of his coming. Oh! how terrible is that account, which we must give at last of the manner in which we have squandered the Lord's money, in trying to undo a world that God would render blessed. It seems to me, that there is an inference, plainly deducible from the word of the Lord, like this: "If God spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all," in what light will he regard the man whose whole powers are bent to counteract by every possible means in his power, the purposes of his mercy. When he shall make inquisition for blood, will not the whole catalogue of venders, stand out in bold relief, on the tablet of the judgment.

I think I see a reason, why the very men who have increased their estate by this traffic, should be, now the

light has broken in, among the first to see, and cure the plague. If the subject should press any consciences in our land, it should be the consciences of the men who are living at ease on the gains of this trade.—Their motives to feel, and act, it would seem must be weighty as a world. Let me present a few of these motives.

Retailers! Ye know not what ye do. You cannot fully estimate the amount of mischief you may have done to families, and to souls already. *You* must live, if God will let you, and *your offspring*, in the society which your traffic is corrupting. The plague may reach some child or friend of yours, and he may quit life in the cabin of the debauched, and moulder in a drunkard's grave. This world belongs to the Lord Jesus, while your trade is increasing its alienation from him. The misery produced by ardent spirits is causing a thousand hearts to ache, and we wish some evidence that yours ache. The retailer brings about him a community in which his soul cannot live, and be in health. An estate gotten by a traffic that is cursing the world, cannot go down to posterity with the blessing of God. Many things indicate that the entire world will soon be subdued to the Lord Jesus; but this cannot be, and the trade in alcohol continue. The dying groans of the *thirty thousand* drunkards, who perish annually in our land, should move you. The moans of their widows and orphans should move you. That "drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God," should move you. "Wo to him that giveth his neighbour drink," should move you.

God will make you your brother's keeper. I have learned that a poor woman went to a neighbouring grog shop, and requested the dealer not to sell any more rum to her husband, as it sometimes rendered him a mad-

man. A few days afterward in a rum excited frenzy, he plunged the knife into her throat. She stayed the blood with her hand, and ran to the shop, and there poured out her life-stream at the feet of the wretch who had just pocketed the price of her blood.

Not long since the following tragedy was acted over in New York. One of our builders was suddenly called to the death-bed of his child. A man in his service, supposing that his employer would naturally return no more to the building during that day, determined to spend it in the pleasures of a debauch. When men have made up their minds to be drunkards, they will not stick at all at a lie. He hasted off to one of our *good moral characters*, whom the authorities of the city have licensed to sell ardent spirits, and in his employer's name asked for a quart of rum. I do not know that he offered as the reason for getting it, that his employer's child was at the point of death, a very common subterfuge in these days, but he was denied the rum because he had no order to this effect. He went, however, to another dealer and procured the quart, and drank it, I know not whether at one draught or four, and immediately sunk into an apoplectic slumber, profound as the sleep of death, and came not back again to reason, till he awoke in the world of wo. This remark is made in the firm belief of that section in the book of God which declares that no drunkard hath inheritance in the kingdom of God. The miserable man seems to have been mad on his own destruction. He did the deed in the very face of death. He would have feared to play the fool, had not his employer been called to the death-bed. If he had feared death as much, or had had any fear of God before his eyes, he might have escaped perdition at that time. Or had he been a man of truth, then he had lived, or had

the man, or rather the woman, that sold him the quart, *for it was a woman*, had there been the fear of God in her heart, then he had lived. Poor soul! he had several chances of living, but they all failed.

And let me say here—though I am quite ashamed to suppose that a woman would encourage that sin that is binding her sex in chains of iron—the woman who sold him the potion that brought him to a premature grave, had lived with an intemperate husband, who, in a fit of intoxication, had burned the building that stood on the very ground where she sold the rum. Thus men and *women* too, it seems, can sport with fire-brands, arrows, and death. It would seem that *one* had had the means of being warned and wakened, if any warning would render woman wise. But she took up her husband and buried him, and then went to selling *rum*. I sincerely hope she will not follow him to the drunkard's grave. When her bed was on fire first, and then her house, and she at length a widow, who would have dreamed that she would have employed herself in selling liquid fire? *O tempora! O mores!* I passed it a few evenings since, the evening of the Sabbath, and saw at her door two sturdy sons of Erin fisting and biting each other, like sons of Belial, and screaming at each bite, and pounce like panthers on some craggy rock of the Alps. We called the watch, and had them put where they would get sober, and where they would have opportunity to meet the police, all breakfasted and warm, and answer to the board, who gave them license to be riotous, for the tumult of the Sabbath evening.

O, how it sickens the heart to know one such case all through! I remember that it was a law in Israel, that in an extreme case, when a house had the leprosy, it should be cleansed by being burnt to ashes. But it

seems that even burning does not cleanse the modern leprosy. The disease outlives the fire, and comes up from the ashes like the fabled Phœnix, all fledged for a renewed occupancy. I suppose it finds a covert in the crumbling walls and burning timbers, and comes out again to infect the timbers and walls that are used in repairing the ruins. I fear nothing will cure it, but the heat of that pit, "the pile whereof is fire and much wood, and the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it."

In a town at the north, where the cause of temperance gained a few years since a sudden and powerful ascendancy in the public mind, there died a rum-seller, in circumstances that made a powerful impression on many minds. Another family lived in the house with him, and one day the lady of that family, perceiving by what she heard and saw, that something was going on that was wrong, burst suddenly into his apartment, and found him hanging by the neck. She called her husband, who immediately cut him down. But as it was his purpose to die as soon as he could recover strength, he broke from the embrace that held him, ran to a shelf, seized a razor, and hastily opened a jugular vein, and died in a few seconds.

The history of the transaction is short. The man had begun to be intemperate, was a customer at his own bar, and very soon perceived that he must feel the pressure of the *hard times*, which tippling always produces, especially when one becomes an inebriate at his own bar. He had been observed to be gloomy, but I do not remember that any apprehensions as to such a result had been entertained till the fatal moment when he was found hanging by the neck. How long he had been in the trade I do not remember, nor can I judge

to what extent he had offended the Lord, by the ruin he had brought upon other families. He was a dealer in the article; and I remember that the society afterwards formed in that town calculated, that every trader in the town manufactured, at the least calculation one confirmed drunkard every three years, and sent one family down into the vale of beggary and rags and wretchedness. If, then, unless this calculation was erratic and wild, he had been a dealer in the article three years, and I know not but he had twenty, he had probably ruined one family, and God in righteous indignation made him a victim to his own traffic. I would willingly have thrown a veil over this scene, and saved his widow, who has married honourably, and his children, who, for aught I know, are doing well, the pain of applying this scrap of history to their own case, were it not that we have been silent too long already, and indulged our sense of delicacy till we have allowed the plague to spread through every limb of our rising and otherwise happy republic. But we must be no longer so much afraid of wounding the sensibility of the living, as not to expose the speaking facts which have transpired in the madness and ruin that men have brought upon themselves and others, by the sale of strong drink. If we had only courage enough to dig through the wall, and lay open the chamber of imagery, as the prophet was directed to do, and see the train of misery and death that moves in the wake of every rum-dealer in the land, the tale would make the ears of every one who heard it tingle. Oh! he has the heart of a tiger, and blood is his legitimate prey. When we see how with a spirit of cold moneyed calculation, he can take the lovely woman and the beloved wife and crucify her husband, and turn her from her home, to starve and

freeze, and make her children beggars and homeless and fatherless at a price at which one would hardly cut off the head of a dog. We are amazed at the long-suffering patience of God. And I know not whether he even weeps at the outrages he commits. Were I not the subject of feelings too strong to trust myself, I would stop and address him if I might in a voice loud enough to reach the two oceans. I would say, that the man who is destined to such a business, ought to have been whelped by a wolf and destined to wear his teeth and his appetite, that his personal equipments might agree with his office, and herd him with his kind. I would train him to his work in the business of a blood-hound, that he might scent his prey afar off. I would at least have him bred a hangman, and spend the whole fountain of his tears before he should be placed at the tap. Then his employment and his soul would be in unholy symphony.

But I must return from my impassioned feeling, or you will say I rail. In our country every man must be free. True, but the term is abused. One ought not to be free to make disastrous inroads upon every family that he may have it in his power to destroy. He ought not to be free to do this even if the father of that family is willing that it should be done. If one had power suddenly to convert men into panthers, and could obtain license so to do, he ought not to feel himself at liberty to do it, till the whole community around him are consulted on the question whether it would be safe to have a panther run at large. To be free is not to be free to destroy, and he has not this kind of freedom even with regard to the soil he owns. He may not so use it as to injure his neighbour. He may not dig a deep pit and leave it open. He may not overthrow a building, even if he will, and can operate only on his own premises. He may not in-

cautiously blast the ponderous rock that may lie in his own territory. He may not be free to remove some natural embankment that wards off a stream which, when turned upon his neighbour's habitation, would endanger the life of his family. One may not have the freedom to set fire to his own house. He may not fall the tree that may even throw down his neighbour's enclosures. Free as we are in this country, we are free only to use our own things so as not to injure our neighbour. And on this principle it is easy to show the extent to which men are free to sell ardent spirits.

Having finished my rhapsody last evening at rather a late hour, under strongly excited feelings, I retired to my bed, and fancied myself employed in advocating the cause of an injured man. He had been prosecuted for a libel by one of our retailers who would impede the cause of reform by bringing odium upon the man who ventured to rebuke his iniquitous traffic. It ran as follows, as nearly as I can remember.

May it please the court. I have risen to advocate the cause of an injured man. You have heard the testimony, and the wretch stands before you. What has his history been but that of a miser, a swindler, a calumniator, a robber, and a bear. I know the court feel clement while I name that man after the blackest prowler of the desert. He has lived to counteract the benevolence of God, and send want and misery, and infamy and death, into habitations, otherwise the abode of comfort and hope. It has been his employment, the work he delights in, and what his soul is shaped to, to barter disease, and famine, and riot, and ruin, for farms, and dwellings, and moneys, to hoard up, and boast of, and buy a name with, and friendship, and influence. I will not name his calling, for he disgraces even that,

and there are men in it whose shoe latchet he may not unloose. The power of calculating his own interest is the only one of his soul that he has cultivated. He would depopulate the world, if he could hold in fee simple the whole territory. Principle he has none. What is right, or virtuous, or decent—he never once asks himself, when money can be had.

He would ruin his family to gain pelf, would school his offspring in his own house with the tippler, the lewd, and the lost, and then wonder why he has not better children. All the degraded pay court to him, will serve him because he feeds their appetites, and blunts their reason, and kills the keenness of their consciences, and smiles on their deeds of darkness and desperation. A friend he has not, nor cares to have, unless that friend will help him heap up gold.

His very advocate is bought over to him by the fee, and has cursed his client as he passed him a thousand times, loudly and fearlessly. If you would kill the charm that his money has, his cringing advocate would rise, and put off his hypocritical face, and shout a loud and long amen to every execration I can dash upon him.

How has he treated my client, and why? hated him, insulted him, belied him, excited others to do the like deeds, and all the while be buying eulogies for himself by his drams.

And for what all this! For knowing him too well, for rebuking him too sharply, for holding out no Bible hope to him, for unbaring perdition to him, for hurting his fraudulent gains, by advocating a virtue that will not be duped by his money, and forming a public opinion that desecrates him, and last and most of all, by exhibiting a manliness of deportment, and a rigidness of morals, that casts upon him a shade dark as the sulphurous smoke of the pit.

The court will not rebuke me. They ought so to do, were I speaking of a man. But they know, and the jury know, that my client has encountered a bear, who cannot be made more black, nor mischievous, nor deformed, than he really is.

I submit the case. I need not have said any thing. The jury will stay in their box and write their verdict. They will rescue my client from the claws of the Ursus, and beat him off to go and hunt other prey, with his teeth blunted, and his nails shortened, and his track scented, as he traces his future midnight routes.

Justice will overtake him *now* and *hereafter*. Now, by your verdict, and hereafter, by the storm of rebuke that will brood over him. His ill-gotten estate will go to the winds. Some heir of his will squander it as fast as he obtained it, and send his father's name with it into oblivion.

Ah! but I just now remember that he will be tried by a higher court, and have a being when the moon is turned to blood. Let me say to him, Poor man, think of that last day. Will your abuse of my client ease your expiring pillow? Will it stay the rage of the fever? Will it cool your burning tongue? Will it light up your dying chamber? Will it bribe off death, and hold at bay his angels? Will it illumine your avenue to the dark world, or upward to a better? No.

SERMON XXXII.

WRATH CONQUERED BY LOVE.

Romans xii. 21.

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

A VERY good man once said. "If there is any one particular temper I desire more than another, it is the grace of meekness; quietly to bear ill treatment, to forget and forgive; and at the same time that I am sensible I am injured, not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good." But this sentiment, be it remembered, could be learned only from heaven. It did not belong to the systems of heathen philosophy. In them it was taught, that to forgive, till revenge had been taken, was weakness. To swear undying wrath, and plot the most summary redress, and sleep not till the enterprize was accomplished, all this was the height of virtue. And above this it is not to be expected that unsanctified human nature will rise. Hence every unchristian land is a field of blood. "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty."

At the dawn of the age of mercy, a Pliny said, but had learned the sentiment from that very religion he affected to despise, "I esteem him the best good man, who forgives others, as though he were every day faulty himself; and who at the same time abstains from faults, as if he pardoned no one." But it was one from heaven, who had long enjoyed the harmony of happy spirits, and had himself the power to mould the hearts of men into his own image; who came down in all the amiableness of God, and taught the world principles of kindness;

that to forgive is possible, and that the meek are blessed. His conduct accorded with his principles. When smitten on the one cheek he turned the other. When led as a lamb to the slaughter, he opened not his mouth, and when nailed to the tree, he merely prayed for those who drove the nails, and plead in their behalf that they knew not what they did. When he quit the world, he made it one of his last acts, to engrave upon the hearts of his followers, as with the point of a diamond upon a rock, the very text I have read you. Its spirit has constituted ever since, and will while the earth is blessed with a trace of his religion, the leading and prominent *social* virtue of his people. It is that feature of their Master which if they do not wear, they cannot *now* be recognized, nor can be known when they come to heaven.

Suffer me to make three inquiries, When may it be considered that one is overcome of evil? How may we save ourselves from the shame and the injury of being thus vanquished? and, How may we overcome evil with good?

I. *When may it be considered that one is overcome of evil?* This is a calamity that may doubtless happen to the *good man*, but is a matter of every day's occurrence to the multitudes of the ungodly. I remark, then, that a man is overcome of evil,

1. *When ill treatment excites the angry passions, and produces harsh and ill natured language.* In this snare unsanctified men are caught daily. Even men of correct habits are sometimes surprised by sudden and unexpected abuse, and rage when they should reason. But in every such case much is lost, and nothing gained. To lose our recollection and temper, and thus be brought down to a level with the man, whom we

should rather have held in dignified and Christian contempt, is to be in a very uncomfortable sense overcome or conquered. This unhappy result was perhaps the very design of the onset. The foe has gained his whole object, and his antagonist is vanquished.

2. One is still more completely overcome of evil, *when he settles down into confirmed hatred of the offender.* He gives place to the devil, and lets the sun go down upon his wrath. By suffering anger to rest in his bosom, he becomes in God's esteem a fool. His passions have the mastery over him, and he becomes and remains a conquered man. And as he pores again and again over the insult that at first unmanned him, and thus deepens the tone of his anger, he may be seen in a figure putting chains upon himself, and riveting the very fetters that bind him. Hardly may he be said to wish an escape from his bondage, or to make the least effort to break the chain that holds him. And not the miseries of an Algerine bondage, could more jade the spirits or vex the heart. It may be, too, that the foe was one whom in his calmer moments he would disdain to set with the dogs of his flock. Yet he has done the very deed he intended to do, and glories in his victory. How unhappy, that one should be thus rendered a captive and a slave, by suffering his passions to rise upon him, and bind him.

3. One is overcome of evil *when he indulges designs of revenge.* The divine injunction is, that we return good for evil, that we love them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use us. If the enemy hunger we are to feed him, if he thirst we are to give him drink, and thus heap coals of fire on his head. By no other means can we so readily conquer our foes. We use in

this case a weapon whose thrust they can neither parry nor endure, under which they melt and perish.

But when we take the opposite course, and return evil for evil, we grant the foe a victory. We suffer ourselves to be driven from the delightful duty of doing good to all men, the only post where we can be happy. The foe who invades our land, and drives us from our farm and our home, has not gained a point, to him more dear, or to us more disastrous; for not the family and the fireside yield us better comforts, than the habit of doing good as we have opportunity. No wealth will buy a luxury like it. Money will purchase food, and raiment, and ease, and influence. But the habit of blessing others with kindnesses, of making glad every heart about us, this is angel's food. The recollection of good done, can make calm the surges of adversity, and render light the gloomiest evening. It has produced a smile upon the brow of death.

It is when nothing can hinder us from doing good, that we are like God. He sends rain upon the just and upon the unjust. Now who will deny, that when injuries prevent us from acting like God, we are overcome of evil. We cease then, for the time being, to have any right to say, that we are the children of our Father in heaven, who causeth his sun to rise on the evil and on the good. And what result more painful, and more degrading, could any foe desire, than thus to dislodge us from all the comforts and privileges of adoption.

4. We are overcome of evil, *when the ill treatment of one, leads us to suspect the friendship of others.* If to some extent it should be the fact, that suffering one instance of abuse, should draw upon us the necessity of suffering other abuses, and the treachery of one friend make others treacherous; still this is far oftener true in

imagination than in reality. In the gloomy moments of suffering injury, we are often induced to believe a lie. An *individual* may treat us rudely and unkindly, and he may be the only one in the whole circle of our acquaintance, who would be willing to injure us. The contrary apprehension is begotten by the gloominess of the mind. And we are sometimes so ungenerous as to believe ourselves abandoned by a whole list of friends, because one has proved treacherous. Thus we are plunged into distress, are ready to say that all men are liars, and by our groundless suspicion, and consequent coldness and distrust, produce the very miseries we forebode. Our apprehensions are the very demons that break the tie of friendship, and dissolve the bonds of brotherhood. They beget distance, caution, jealousy, and neglect, and the result is abandonment and hatred. Thus in an evil hour we draw upon ourselves the very miseries we might avoid, and the foe is suffered to inflict a wound deeper and deadlier than he had hoped to. The bonds of friendship are sundered, the peace of the mind is destroyed, the interests of Zion are injured, and the foe sits and smiles in his ambush at the miseries we inflict upon ourselves. We are overcome of evil.

5. We are more yet completely overcome of evil, *when abuse begets habitual sourness of temper.* When God does not prevent by his grace, long protracted injuries, inflicted by insidious foes, are prone to produce this unhappy result. The spirits are jaded by adversity, and become expert in transferring odium from one person or thing to another, till very soon it can be expanded over the whole creation of God. There is begotten an acid temper, and the very landscape is robed in gloom. The irritated master wreaks his vengeance upon the unof-

fending slave. The innocent child dreads the return of his ill natured father, and the very wife turns pale, when some foe has kindled anger in the bosom of her husband. The indulgence of one unkind affection, like some leprosy, infuses its poison through the whole soul. The eye it looks through becomes a contaminated medium, and transfers its own disease to every object of its vision. The man had a friendly heart, but he becomes a misanthrope; he did enjoy society, but would now be content with a hermitage; he prized Christian fellowship, but he doubts now whether piety itself can make an honest man. How evidently is such a man overcome of evil.

6. One is overcome of evil, *when he attempts unnecessarily a public vindication of his character.* I say *unnecessarily*, for it cannot be denied that a good man, without his wish, may be forced into such a measure. Often is this the very object which some malicious foe would accomplish. He knows perhaps, what is too true, that the best character will suffer by handling, and when he cannot catch the good man in crime, will compass his wishes if he can so fix imputation, as to force him to go into a proof of his innocence. Conscious that he cannot himself establish the *positive*, he would put the virtue he hates upon proving the *negative*, or of perishing.

He issues his libel, invents circumstances that shall favour it, employs all the truth he can, in corroboration of his falsehood, and where truth fails to fill out the picture, he scruples not to employ a lie. He would try both your temper and your reputation. Screened from view, he would cast filth upon you, and amuse himself and others to see you wipe it off. He hopes there may be

some spot indelible, or that you may sin in the act of establishing your innocence.

Now the snare is laid. But calmness, and reflection, and prayer, may easily be victorious. Good character cannot be hurt but by its owner. The tongue of slander may injure for a moment the stranger, but good conduct will invariably sustain good character. And it has come at length to be noted as a suspicious circumstance, when we court the aid of law and counsel to defend our reputation. It was a shrewd remark of Dr. Mather, "The malice of an ill tongue cast upon a good character, is like a mouthful of smoke blown upon a diamond which at present may obscure its beauty, but is easily rubbed off and the gem restored to its pristine lustre." "Depraved as the world is," said a man of long experience, "let them have your character, and though they may handle it roughly, they will ultimately restore it whole as they found it." But let them see that their attacks enrage you, and put you off your guard, or place you in a quixotic attitude of arming yourself for a conflict with a shadow, and their object is accomplished, and you are overcome of evil.

II. *How may we save ourselves from the shame and injury of being thus vanquished?* It is possible, no doubt, to obey the injunction of the text, as well as any other in the whole list of precepts. There are exertions which if we make, with a proper sense of our dependance on God, will enable us in the most evil day to stand. Let us then, in the

1. Place, bear it strongly in mind, *That he who would designedly injure us does himself a greater injury.* There is in nature, or rather in the divine purpose, a principle of prompt and powerful reaction. Let one

attack your character, and sure as life he hurts his own. Let him spread ill report, and that report will recoil upon his own reputation. He will be considered a slanderer. If one act will not fix upon him this stigma, that very impunity will induce him to repeat the deed, till the character he deserves will adhere to him. Thus *he* suffers and *not you*.

Or would he merely disturb your peace, let him but alone, and his own peace is injured more than yours. God can give you a peace, that nothing can disturb. If you must unjustly suffer. God can support you and comfort you, but this he will not do for the man who wrongs you. His, on reflection, will be the shame, and the guilt, and the remorse, of a deed which God will not justify. The wound he intended for you, will rankle in his own bosom.

Now if the man who intended to injure us, has wounded himself, then we should pity him, and pray for him, and not study a duplicate revenge. There opens upon us the delightful opportunity, to bind up his wounds, and pour in oil and wine, and we may have the luxury to forget and forgive, a luxury which the whole herd of evil doers never tasted.

Or be it our temporal interest they would hurt, or our influence, there is but this one issue to all the operations of malevolence, the curse lights upon the perpetrators. Their violent dealings shall come down upon their own head. They are taken in their own snare.

2. *If we resist evil, we are invariably injured.* The foe is the more courageous, the more fierce and prompt the repulse he meets with. He exhibits now a prowess that he could never have summoned, had he coped with mere non-resistance. A slanderous report is repeated and magnified, because it has been wrathfully

contradicted. The presumption is that when the misstatement shall have varied its shape and attitude, it can be imposed upon the credulous as a new fact, that shall go to corroborate the old. And let resistance be kept up, and soon the insulated charge becomes a long catalogue of crimes, that go to establish each other, and render unquestionable the whole series of alligations. Now it is hoped that the world will say, such a host of imputations cannot want for some foundation in fact. The charge of intemperance corroborates that of fraud and falsehood. The testimony of two liars, when they substantially agree, and there has been no concert, may establish the truth.

Thus charges which are all false, and are multiplied by resistance, are made to prop each other, till there is begotten suspicion that never need have been. And the needless attempt at investigation fixes the impression, that character is crumbling, and that a still bolder push will be accompanied with complete success. Thus by wrestling with the blast, we are liable to be discomfited, when had we lain down and been quiet, the storm would have beat upon us a little, and passed over, and we should have seen the sun again in all his brightness. The foe intended to render us unhappy, and he learns that he has, and hopes most cordially that another onset may undo us. But let him see that you remain unmoved, that his attack has not even discomposed you, that you are invulnerable as the rock, and he must be the veriest idiot if he draws another arrow from his quiver. Hence, said the poet,

> "Tempest will rive the *stiffest oak*,
> *Cedars* with all their pride are broke,
> Beneath the fury of that stroke,
> Which never harms the *willows*."

3. *It will calm us in an hour of onset, to feel that wicked men are God's sword.* From him we deserve all the evil that the most malicious foe can inflict. True, men are none the less free agents, and accountable, because they are the rod and the staff in the hand of the Lord. But it would argue a want of submission to parental restraint, should the child seem angry at the rod. It is our consolation to know that God holds our enemies in his hand, directs every wound they shall inflict, and has promised to restrain their wrath, when it will not praise him. He has put his hook in their nose, and his bridle in their lips, and will in due time, when he has sufficiently humbled his people, lead their enemies back by the way that they came.

Hence, when ungodly men would do us injury, it should rather awaken our pity *for* them, than our anger *against* them. We have a divine illustration exactly in point, and conscious ill desert should ever lead us to say with David, in reference to Shimei, "Let him curse for the Lord hath bidden him." "Why doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" If the men who injure us are to be the instruments of *our* sanctification, and then, unless the grace of God interpose, are to be the objects of *his* everlasting displeasure, be their designs never so base, how can we feel otherwise than pitiful and kind?

4. *It will be a timely and sweet reflection, for a period of abuse, that ill treatment is among the all things that shall work together for our good.* Trials may come from a quarter unexpected, and from those who owe us the kindest treatment. We took sweet counsel with them, and went to the house of God in company. Be it even so, still faith assures us, that their injuries will bless us, will sanctify us, and help us on in

our preparation for the enjoyment of God in his kingdom. This one question settled, and I will inflict no wound upon my adversary. He is doing me everlasting good, and though he mean not so, still I cannot injure him who is constrained to be my benefactor. I will forgive him before he asks forgiveness, and will exert myself to induce him to pass on to heaven with me And if unsuccesful, still the promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," will bear my spirits up through the darkest and dreariest hour.

5. *It should ever be our reflection in the hour of attack, that to be like Christ we must not resist evil.* "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." He passed meekly through torrents of abuse. It poured in upon him wave after wave, but he stood, a rock. When they would catch him in his words, he spoke wisely and kindly. When they would stone him, he inquired for which of his kind deeds they did it. When that fiend of midnight betrayed him, after joining in the Pascal supper, and having long borne the badge of discipleship, how meekly he inquired, "Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" Now would we be followers of the Lord Jesus, the track is plain; we must not suffer ourselves to be overcome of evil.

Finally, there is the direct command of God. No precept can be more binding than the text. To indulge a vindictive spirit is an infringement upon the divine prerogative. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." There is a day of retribution appointed, and one is constituted judge who cannot err. In the hour of conflict we have only to refer men to that day when every wrong will be rectified. And if our sufferings are prolonged, still the years of heaven will run on

till they are all forgotten. A Christian is but a pardoned rebel, and may not avenge himself. And all others may well fear to be vindictive, lest wrath come upon them to the uttermost. With the same measure that we mete, it shall be measured to us again.

III. *How may we overcome evil with good?* To do this will require the sacrifice of bad passions. The unrenewed heart has a keen relish for revenge. Not the most delicious food pleases the palate better. But this malicious appetite the grace of God must subdue, ere the heaven-born principle in the text can be adopted: a sufficient reason why the heathen have never imbibed the the spirit of meekness. Parents taught their children to retain anger. Instance the father of Annibal, whose dying injunction to his son was, that he should never forgive the Romans: this precept he must swear he would obey. And many children learn of their parents now the same lesson. They are apt to learn, and they often have precept and practice to teach them. "Cursed parents! Cursed children!"

But let the heart be once subdued by the grace of God, and the lesson of the text is easily learned. The doctrine is simply this. If one treats us unkindly, we must treat him well. If he defame, let us say the kindest things possible of him. If he hurt our interest, let us advance his. If he expose our faults, let us cover his. If he will not oblige us, we must do kindnesses to him. If he deals reproach, we must practise no retort. If he curse us we must pray for him, if he hunger we must feed him, and if he thirst give him drink. If he smite us on the one cheek, turn the other. In one word, when he has done his best to injure us, let us do our best to bless and comfort him.

It may be well when possible to do another good in the very article in which he has intended our hurt. This will be entering the list with him, and will bring our virtues into a close comparison with his iniquities; thus shall we heap coals of fire on his head, and if he be not a rock shall melt and subdue him. When we would overcome an enemy with kindness, we make his conscience our ally, and bring him to hate himself and respect us. Then his weapons recoil upon his own head, and his violent dealings come down upon his own pate. We conquer him by love.

But in every effort of this nature we must *feel kindly*. A counterfeit affection will not bear us through. The heart must be primarily consulted in every such act of Christian revenge. Else the hypocrisy will be evident, and the defeat certain. When Paul said to the high priest, who had commanded him to be unlawfully smitten, "God shall smite thee thou whited wall," he neither obeyed the injunction of the text, nor was in a proper state of mind to obey it. Not even piety will render it certain that we shall feel kindly under abuse. In the blessed Jesus we have the only example that never failed. He was proof against every attack. The only case in which he exhibited the appearance of anger, was when his Father's house was made a den of thieves; and then he was angry without sin. Let our temper be like his, and we shall find it easy to do right: and to be like him, we are infinitely obligated.

It may greatly help us, when we come in contact with unhallowed passions, to reflect, that not certainly is the man our enemy, who may be tempted to treat us unkindly. When he has done us this one injury, if we bear it with a Christian temper, he may remain kindly

disposed to us, may become a firm and steady friend: while our wrath and revenge may erect him into a subtle and dangerous enemy. He may have made his onset upon us in an hour of irritation, and may be in an hour, more ashamed of himself than we are of him.

Is the offender an ungodly man, there is a single thought that must prepare us to meet his rage with calmness. He has no treasure in the heavens. He is passing on to the blackness of darkness forever. We shall see him when a few days have gone by, unless the grace of God prevent, covered with shame and confusion. His harvest will be passed and his summer ended, and he not saved. And can we be angry to-day with one who is to perish to-morrow? Can any sensation but pity control us, while we see a deluded man raving on the very threshold of perdition?

Or is the offender a Christian, then how it should shame us to become angry with him. Angry with a brother, a follower of the Lord Jesus! He could not intend me wrong; his judgment erred; he will ask forgiveness, before the sun goes down, of God and of me. The followers of the Lord Jesus bite and devour one another! "O, tell it not in Gath; publish it not in the streets of Askalon!" The Saviour must not be so wounded in the house of his friends. Let me have, I will not say my *religion*, let me have my *reason* in exercise, and I will bear any thing from a child of God. For my right hand, I will not raise it against one who is heir with me to an inheritance in the skies, and is to help me adore the Lamb forever. Joint heirs with Jesus Christ! what a binding influence has this thought upon Christian hearts.

REMARKS.

1. How highly should we value our Bibles which teach us this amiable lesson. But for this book, we had never learned how to *receive* an injury, or *forgive* one. It belongs not to human nature, untaught from heaven, to invent such a sentiment as the text. Our parents had been fierce and cruel, and they had taught *us* to be implacable, had not the Bible been the associate of our home. And how this one heavenly principle lessens the miseries of human life! How many the wrongs it obliterates, and how many the social endearments it begets! Precious book, be thou the inmate of my bosom, till this spirit shall quit its house of clay!

2. This subject will teach us to pity the heathen. Their endless quarrels are because they have no Bible. They would let their children, their widows, their sick, and their aged *live*, if they had a Bible. They would forgive their enemies and be meek, and benevolent, and gracious had they not been without the book that teaches these heavenly lessons. Send them a few of your Bibles, and they will soon beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, and those vast fields of blood will be transformed into the garden of the Lord. He will accompany his word with his Spirit.

3. How happy the period of the Millennium. The Bible will then have its legitimate influence, and there will prevail the very spirit inculcated in the text. In what noble figures does the prophet teach us this truth, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the

bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cocatrice-den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." You have often read this precious text. How happy the eyes that are not closed upon the scenes of life, till that sweet morning has come, and all these tumults, that keep this world a wilderness, have subsided! May some favoured child of mine live to see that happy period.

4. Let us learn brethren, whether that day approaches. It will not burst upon us in a moment. There will be a gradual increase of that spirit which the text inculcates; till every parent will teach it to his children, and every child will love to learn. From the family circle it will spread out over the whole land, and render it Emmanuel's land, a mountain of holiness and a habitation of righteousness. Do we see an increase of this spirit? Do we feel it in our hearts? Does it go out to view in our daily deportment? Then the day approaches.

5. This subject will try our piety. Can we overcome evil with good? Does the tiger or the lamb, predominate in our social intercourse? When we receive abuse, with what temper do we act? To this test our religion must at last be brought, and by this and other similar tests, the question must be decided, whether we can be happy with angels, or must make our bed in the pit. Will God sanctify us by his spirit, and fit us all to dwell in a peaceful happy world. Amen.

SERMON XXXIII.

A BRAND PLUCKED FROM THE FIRE.

Luke xxiii. 43.

To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

THE scene of the crucifixion was, in many respects, the most awfully interesting that ever human eyes witnessed. Many things combined to create this interest: the time, the place, the motley mixture of character among both the persecuted and the persecutors, the miracles wrought, the worlds interested in the event, all conspired to render the moment like no other, since the wheels of time began to move. Angels gazed, and devils, at the whole scene, and probably every world in being was interested.

And yet, in all this scene, it has seemed to me, that the redemption of the dying thief was one of the most interesting circumstances. Here was seen all the grace of Jesus Christ, and with it the supremacy of his power. He proved himself the Alpha and the Omega, having the keys of hell and of death, since, in the act of dying, he could communicate to his fellow-sufferer immortal life, and snatch the prey from the teeth of the destroyer, and bear it up to heaven in triumph. The friends of God, in every age before and since then, have fixed their eye on that hour as the proudest and most precious section of time in all the revolving ages.

The spirit of prophecy, looking through the lapse of many hundred years, and dwelling with rapture on the character and conflict of the Redeemer, foretold that he should be numbered with the transgressors. Accord-

ingly, two men of despicable character, who had been condemned to die for theft, were crucified with him, one on his right hand and the other on the left. It was doubtless the intention of his enemies, by this arrangement, to degrade the immaculate Son of God.

We are told that one of the malefactors which were hanged, railed on him, "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? and we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

We are told by one of the other Evangelists "that the *thieves* also which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth:" implying, as it would seem, that the penitent thief, at the first, joined his companion in reproaching the Lord of glory. In pursuing the subject, my object will be *to notice the evidence afforded us in the narrative, that* ONE *of the malefactors was saved.* I shall then inquire, *Whether there are, probably, many instances of late conversion?*

I. I am to notice the *evidence afforded us in the narrative, that* ONE *of the dying malefactors was saved.* The probability seems to be that he was nailed to the cross, a stupid unbeliever. If he joined his fellow in reproaching the Saviour, there can remain no doubt that he was then in his sins. But between the sixth hour and the ninth, he was evidently made a new creature. Of this interesting fact we have evidence.

1. In the *faithfulness* with which he *reproved* his

miserable associate. I know that the bare act of administering reproof is not of itself decisive testimony, one way or the other, of piety. We are always to notice the circumstances and the spirit with which the reproof is administered. It often happens that the basest of men, in a fit of passion, reprove their fellow-men. But the circumstances in which the dying malefactor reproved his fellow-sufferer, give his conduct in that matter peculiar weight. All about him were despising the Lord Jesus Christ as an impostor and a miscreant. The Redeemer was accused of many gross crimes, and probably the thief had not the means of knowing their accusations to be false. It would not have been surprising if he had viewed the Saviour as the vilest of the three sufferers. With such impressions he would not have viewed the conduct of his fellow as very criminal. His reproof then, testifies, that he had other views of Christ than were entertained by the multitude who witnessed his agonies. And while he abhorred the conduct of his fellow, he boldly expressed that abhorrence, in contempt of the full tide of public opinion. If one should reprove the profane or lewd, while in the company of pious men, or at a time or place where and when religion was popular, it would be no very decisive testimony of his piety; but let him administer reproof when all about him would justify the sin, and despise the reprover; then it becomes an auspicious testimony. Wicked men are strongly tempted to fall in with the current of public opinion. To do what will please and be what others will approve is very much the leading principle with unbelievers. When we see them face about, and stem the current of depravity, this conduct tells in their favour.

2. The believing malefactor *freely acknowledged*

his sins, and the *justice* of his *execution*. "And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds." There may be confessions of guilt, where sin is not hated. And yet a free and ingenuous confession, where there is no temporal advantage to be gained, is evidence of that compunction which always attends repentance. "He that confesseth his sins shall find mercy."

3. The penitent thief *feared the Lord*. Said he to his companion, Dost thou not fear God? They had none but God to fear. Human justice had exerted upon them its utmost rigour. And yet the dying thief confessed, that there was wrath for them to fear. It is manifest that he believed in a future righteous retribution, and was acting with reference to that day, when he must give account of the deeds done in the body.

4. There was evidence of *meekness*, *humility*, *patience*, and *submission*. He rebelled not against the authority that crucified him, submitted to what he deserved, and seemed willing to suffer, without complaint. He felt and acknowledged that he was receiving "the due reward of his deeds;" that no injustice, but the contrary, was done him, while he was made a public example of justice. He took to himself the punishment of his sins, and submitted, without a murmur, to the rigorous operations of human law.

And with his submission there seems to have blended meekness, patience, and humility. In fact, these attributes of mind are very much the same, and have their distinct names because of the varied circumstances in which the same Christian grace is brought into exercise. When the suffering penitent cheerfully cleared the Saviour of every fault, and charged crime, and guilt, and desert of punishment upon himself, he used the

legitimate language of humility. He did what every sinner must do before he can be accepted of Christ, took to himself the punishment of his sins. He appears to have received the death he deserved with meekness, and to have endured with patience the pangs that brought that death upon him.

5. The dying malefactor discovered *strong faith* in the Redeemer. He viewed the Lord Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah, believed that though he saw him dying, he should live again, that he was the possessor of a kingdom, that he had power to bless and save him, and in the exercise of this confidence, committed his soul to the Redeemer's care; "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Now it would be no other than a strong faith that could thus operate at such a moment. It was the hour, and the power, of darkness. The object of his faith was, at that moment, in a state of *debasement*, *shame*, and *contempt*. He was believed to be an impostor, was viewed as a malefactor, had been condemned as a criminal, and was suffering the penalty of human law. Such would have been the view of unbelief. His disciples had forsook him; one had betrayed him, and one denied him. If we except the conduct of the Saviour upon his trial, and while hanging on the cross, and the wonders that transpired at the time, the earthquake and the darkness, there was every thing to tempt an unbeliever to view the suffering Saviour with scorn and contempt. And there were doubtless those present who would explain those strange phenomena so as to lay the fears they might awaken. And we do not perceive that they had any effect upon the Jewish Sanhedrim, or the Roman soldiery.

It must, then, have been a strong faith which would lead the dying thief to commit his immortal interests to

one who was thus in the very depth of disgrace, and one with whose character he was, probably, but very little acquainted. He doubtless saw in the Redeemer, while hanging on the cross, a dignity of deportment, illustrative of his high and holy character. He heard him pray for the presence of his Father, and the forgiveness of his enemies, which might convince him that an august personage, one more than human, stood by his side. Still that faith was strong which could surmount so many obstacles, and commit such amazing interests to one apparently so unable even to help himself.

6. There was, in favour of the penitence of the thief, the evidence of *prayer*. One would hardly suppose that he had *leisure* to pray, as he hung upon the torturing nails, and groaned with every breath, and bled in agony at every pore,—there could be but little leisure either to think or pray. But in the midst of all this he prayed, "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom?" There is a prayer, I know, that is not of faith, nor can any form of prayer be to those who cannot know the heart, decisive evidence of piety. It is a sure *negative evidence*, but not *positive*. If one *does not* pray, he is unquestionably an unbeliever. Still it is said of Saul, "Behold, he prayeth," and this fact was mentioned as an evidence of his piety. And prayer is frequently thus spoken of in Scripture, and must be viewed in the dying malefactor, as evidence of piety.

Finally, however, our only assurance that the dying malefactor went to heaven is to be gathered from the declaration of our Lord, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." But for this assertion of the Redeemer, we could only have *hoped* that the miserable man was saved, and it would have remained till the judgment

day a doubtful question, like the conversion of Nicodemus.

II. I proceed to inquire into the *probability of there being many late conversions.* By late conversions I mean, what you will understand me to mean, converversions which take place in the late hours of life. Although I shall dwell more particularly on the scenes of the sick and dying bed, yet many of my remarks will apply to the period of old age. I confess my unshaken belief that the instances are rare when a person reaches heaven after spending almost the whole of life in sin. In support of this opinion, I refer you, in the

1. Place, to the *Scriptures.* The whole aspect of the sacred volume exhibits this truth. Of the many thousands of whose conversion we read in the Scriptures, but one is said to have been converted in the dying hour, and but few are known to have been far advanced in life. From the very nature, however, of this article, I can make no quotations. If any doubt the truth of the remark, it will belong to them to bring forward, if they be able, Scripture testimony to the contrary.

The promises and invitations of the gospel imply that God's chosen time to make up his jewels is the early part of life. "Those that seek me early shall find me." "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

The same may be inferred from the *threatenings.* "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." If you will examine your Bibles, al-

most every page will teach you in one form and another, that religion is to be the business of early life, and not of a dying hour.

2. That few are converted in the late hours of life is manifest from the *very nature of religion.* It is spoken of as a thing that commences, and by time grows and is matured in the heart. It is compared to leaven hid in the meal, which gradually operates till the whole is leavened. Paul speaks of the Christian as "forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to those things that are before, pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And again, speaking of the family of believers, says, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." From these representations, and a thousand like them, it would seem that the believer is converted generally long before he dies, and has time to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth, till by degrees he becomes matured for the heavenly state. Converted late in life there would be no time for this gradual progress. The Christian's life could not then be a warfare, he would have no need of the whole armour of God. All the directions given to the Christian how to live, and how to feel, and how to speak so as to honour religion, would seem to be lost if the great body of believers were not converted long before they die. Indeed the very idea of a visible church makes it manifest that the great body of the redeemed will be enlisted early in the service of God, be members of his church below, and in this world, by discipline, and instruction, and frequent communications of grace, become qualified for the rest and the glory of heaven.

3. The fact that a *preached gospel* is God's *insti-*

tuted means of salvation, goes to show that we are to expect but few conversions on the dying bed. For "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." "For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Speaking of the heathen the same apostle says, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" The three thousand on the day of Pentecost were awakened under a preached gospel. And ever since then, this has been the grand means of the salvation of souls. But these means are scarcely applicable to the dying man. True, he may have heard the gospel before, and the truths he has heard may awaken him when on the dying bed; or the gospel may be preached by his bedside, if infidel associates have not fenced the truth from his dying chamber. Still it is not to be expected that when one has neglected religion till the last days of his life, God will then send him the gospel and give it such efficacy as to change the heart, and if not, the hope of a death-bed repentance is small.

4. As far as we can know the purpose of God from Scripture or fact, it is his purpose to employ his people in this world as instruments of his glory, before he takes them to heaven. Inquire of the children of God the date of their conversion, and they will almost uniformly point you to some early period of life. Our revivals prevail principally among the youth. The psalmist says, "Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." God says, "They that honour me I will honour." Believers go from strength to strength,

till every one of them appeareth in Zion before God. We fight for the crown, we wrestle for the prize, and strive for the victory. But all this is incompatible with a death-bed repentance, and renders it, I think, clearly improbable that there are many such instances.

5. Many circumstances conspire to render the exercises of the sick and dying bed *doubtful*. In that situation we are to expect from the very nature of the case, that one will be filled with alarm. He views himself on the verge of eternity. All he does must be done quickly. Conscious that the whole of life has been mis-spent, that he must soon die, and that there is no work, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, nor device in the grave, and that judgment will tread upon the heels of death, he becomes alarmed of course.

And if the paroxysms of disease do not prevent, he is very liable to become the subject of rational conviction. Shut up from the scenes of a busy world, he will naturally think on his case; and the more he thinks, the deeper will be his impression of his guilt and ruin. The truth he has heard he will now recollect. The invitations he has neglected, the admonitions he has slighted, the warnings and the reproofs, will all return anew, and pour their congregated light upon his conscience. It is an honest hour, and the truth will be felt. Hence a state of alarm and conviction would seem to be a thing of course, if the ravages of disease leaves any leisure or strength for reflection.

And such a state of mind is very liable to be followed by calmness, hope, and joy. From the very constitution of our minds, and of some more than others, we are liable to vibrate from one extreme to the other, from a state of deep depression and despair, to a state of ecstatic joy. We have seen persons who, on the loss of some

dear friend, seemed as if they should die, and yet, in a few days, would be even light and trifling. In times of awakening, some have seemed to be filled with the terrors of hell, and in a short time were more vain and trifling than ever. With a dying man who is conscious that he has lived without God and without Christ in the world, there is such an amazing interest at stake, that he will naturally grasp at a hope that he may be saved. When death stares us in the face, a hopeless state is intolerable. Hence the dying man will be constantly looking about him for evidence that he is a believer, and will be very liable to obtain a hope without evidence.

When hope is once acquired, many things will conspire to strengthen it. It may be succeeded by great joy. The idea that one is safe will naturally render him happy. And this false joy by re-action will strengthen his hope. Friends who are about the sick-bed, if pious or not pious, will be glad to see the sufferer happy, and will be tempted to do their utmost to strengthen and confirm his hope. And if pious, unless peculiarly faithful, they will be liable to aid his delusions, and strengthen his refuge of lies.

He thinks his passions subdued by the grace of God, when in fact they are only tamed by the paroxysms of disease. The appetites do not demand unlawful gratification, for they have for the present ceased their operation. The patient imagines that he has ceased to love the world, when in fact he is only beaten off from its embrace by the rage of disease. Because he is constrained to abandon the cares, the pleasures, and the vexations of life, and is led to think much on the subject of death and judgment, he presumes that he has become heavenly-minded.

As the words of the lips are little to be relied on, and are not spoken of in Scripture as full evidence of piety, it is difficult to suppose that a dying man should be able to apply to his piety any very decisive tests. He cannot mingle with the ungodly and show us that he hates and reproves their vile conduct. He cannot engage in trade or business, and so prove to us that he will not be hard and dishonest in his dealings. He cannot know the miseries of those around him, and show his benevolence by flying to their help. He cannot mingle with God's people in the sanctuary and the place of prayer and conference, and show us that he loves the people and worship of God. He is not exposed to temptation, and cannot prove to us that he has a religion that can overcome the world, and stand against the influx of iniquity.

In one word, a sick and dying man can bear but little of the fruits of holiness. He cannot give us the same evidence that a person in health can in the same time, which leads me to observe,

6. That the time is *so short* generally in which we can observe the exercises of a sick and dying man, that whatever the case may be, our hopes cannot rise very high. If one in health, without any special event of providence to alarm him, become the subject of awakening conviction and hope, still we at first rejoice with trembling, and often many months elapse before we lose all our fears that he may return again to a state of stupidity. And our apprehensions must be greater still in the case of one whose exercises commenced while he stood on the verge of the grave.

7. The fact that so many have appeared well in the sick and dying chamber, while death was seen to hang over them, but have on their recovery lost their impressions, and appeared even worse than ever, has rendered

suspected the exercises of the sick and dying bed. It is true that we have no authority to say that God may not do more for those who die than for those who recover. This matter we must leave with God till the last day. Very few persons have failed to witness one or more instances in which recovery to health has disappointed high hopes of piety. In some cases all doubt was gone, and if the patient had died, there had been the firmest confidence of meeting him in heaven; and still on his return to health, a few weeks made him careless, and the morning cloud and the early dew were dissipated. With very many facts like these before our eyes, how is it possible but that every prudent man should admit with caution the validity of those hopes of heaven that are generated upon the death-bed. And now what use shall we make of all this? I

REMARK,

If death-bed repentances are so doubtful, then *delays* in matters of religion are imminently dangerous. To-morrow, perhaps, you betake yourself to the sick-bed, and it proves your death-bed. There is something said to you on the affairs of your soul, and it may be that you are serious, and finally begin to hope that you shall live in heaven. But that hope may prove a spider's web, and you may lean on it and perish. Your friends may think you gone to heaven, but they may find, when the last day has come, that you are on the left hand. Attend to religion now in health, and then when you die we shall have hope of you, and comfort in you. Now, if you want advice we can give it, but on the dying bed, if we call on you, you will be too weak to receive instruction, and we can only pray for you, and perhaps let you perish.

SERMON XXXIV.

GOSPEL TRUTH DISTINGUISHED.

John xviii. 38.

What is truth?

THIS question was put to our Lord by the miserable time-serving Pilate, who had no heart to love what he inquired after. He, and the whole multitude of the ungodly in all ages, would have the reputation of being the friends of truth. But when they have inquired what truth is, they are careful to turn away their ear from the answer. This one fatal error characterizes the whole human family, till the spirit of God sanctifies the heart. Till then, they will not candidly examine the Bible, nor put themselves under the guidance of the spirit of God, nor will love the truth when they know it. Hence to know and love the truth, is characteristic of a heavenly mind.

But the question still comes up, What is that truth, which I must know and love, in order to have evidence that I am born of God? The text would furnish a field too large for a single sermon, and must be diminished. *It will be my object to give you a few general characteristics of gospel truth.* In doing this, I shall name the particular doctrines no farther than may be necessary, to illustrate some leading feature of revealed truth generally. It has always seemed to me, as possible to know gospel truth *by its properties*, as to arrive by this means at knowledge on any other subject, and have rather been surprised, to have met with no attempt at

definition, such as I now have in contemplation, unless in those beautiful lines of the poet, which I quote with great pleasure:

"But what is truth? 't was Pilate's question, put
To truth itself, that deign'd him no reply.
And wherefore? will not God impart his light
To them that ask it?—Freely—'t is his joy,
His glory, and his nature, to impart.
But to the proud, uncandid, insincere,
Or negligent inquirer, not a spark.
What 's that which brings contempt upon a book,
And him who writes it; though the style be neat,
The method clear, and argument exact?
That makes a minister in holy things
The joy of many, and the dread of more.
His name a theme for praise and for reproach?—
That, while it gives us worth in God's account,
Depreciates and undoes us in our own?
What pearl is it that rich men cannot buy,
That learning is too proud to gather up;
But which the poor, and the despis'd of all,
Seek and obtain, and often find unsought?
Tell me—and I will tell thee what is truth."

I should choose to say in answer to the question in the text, What is truth?

I. *Truth is that which is consistent with the main scope of God's word.* An insulated text or two, may seem to support what is not truth. By such means almost any sentiment may be drawn from the Bible, or from any other book. We could thus prove that, "There is no God:" "Thou shalt not surely die:" "Thou shalt hate thine enemy:" "I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my own heart, to add drunkenness to thirst." Now you may fill a book with such insulated texts, but it would be all false: a lie couched in Bible language, but not the less a lie.

All the false doctrines, that have spread their plagues through this ill-fated world, have thus originated, and been thus sustained. To him who is willing to understand it, the Bible is plain; but to one who prefers delusion, and wishes to believe a lie, because he has no pleasure in the truth, the Bible presents it in that disconnected form, that he may wrest it, if he please, to his own destruction.

Still it will prove true, that when a tortured text has been made the basis of a false doctrine, that doctrine will not be sustained by the main drift of inspiration. It cannot be supported by other texts, without giving them a false and forced construction, and the whole system when thus built will be a baseless fabric. There will be many texts in the very face of the false doctrine, and in a greater number still its falsehood will be implied. But it will not be thus with truth. When you have fairly gathered any doctrine that God meant to teach, from any part of his word, you will find it asserted in other parts, implied in others, and in none contradicted.

Now apply this rule to any one doctrine, or system of doctrines, and it will assuredly assist you in discovering what is truth. The saint's perseverance, for instance, is clearly taught in this text, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way; though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand;" and in this, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord;" and in this, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it, until the day of

Jesus Christ;" and in this, "The righteous shall hold on his way."

Now the doctrine thus taught in a number of texts. of which I have quoted but few, has implied support in a far more numerous class still. All those texts which speak of heaven, as the final home of believers, imply the doctrine; all those which make regenerated men the Saviour's reward; the promises made to believers, of help in the time of need, of victory in the hour of conflict, of escape from temptation, of light in darkness, of strength equal to their day, of guidance through life, and of hope in death. It is implied in that assurance of salvation which Paul had, and which every believer may have; in the terms of the covenant, which is said to be *everlasting*, *well ordered in all things and sure;* and in the very nature of holiness, which immediately, on taking existence in the heart, seizes heavenly objects as its own inheritance. And the doctrine thus supported *directly*, and by *extensive implication*, is nowhere contradicted.

Now bring any doctrine to this test, and if thus supported it is true. Upon the truth, light will shine from almost every page of inspiration. But we must be *candid* and *diligent*, or we may not hope to be enlightened. If men go to the Bible, determined to support a scheme of their own, it is by no means certain, that there is any lie, so obvious to detection, that it may not be thus sustained: for it is threatened, "For this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." If you still ask, What is truth? I answer again,

II. *Truth is that, after which men inquire hum-*

bly and prayerfully. That was a good ejaculation of the Psalmist, "Open thou mine eyes, and I shall behold wondrous things out of thy law." All Bible truth is in its very nature humiliating to a sinner; hence there must be humility, or there can be here no possible evidence of that candour, which is necessary in researches after truth of any kind. And we shall pray while endeavouring to acquaint ourselves with God's word, because a desire to know the truth implies a heart to love it, and this implies a spirit of prayer.

All those men who have searched the most profoundly, after the mind of God, have been men of prayer. They made ample proficiency in their inquiries, because in the outset they imbued their souls with the spirit of the gospel. In answer to their prayers they had the teachings of the Spirit of God. It is only a mind opened by the Sanctifier for the reception of truth, joined to a heart softened and subdued by him, that can have any very exalted pleasure in becoming acquainted with those holy objects which the truths of God present. He will have a low opinion of his own wisdom, and will feel his need of divine aid at every stage of his progress.

It is recorded of one good man, who is known to have made uncommon proficiency in his researches after truth, that he studied his Bible every day upon his knees. And of every good man it must be true, from the nature of the case, that he studies the word of God with his eye directed toward heaven for divine teaching. Between truth, and a humble prayerful spirit, there is that indissoluble connection, that will justify the inference, that where the one is, there we may with great probability look for the other.

But the search for error requires no humility, and no prayer. He who forms his system out of his own heart,

and goes to the Bible to have it sustained, will be too proud to let the testimony of inspiration alter it. He feels no need of light and asks none: would be afraid to pray, lest God should convince him that his favourite system is a lie. Hence inquire, would you know what truth is, what are the doctrines that men learn on their knees; feeling themselves ignorant, and poor, and blind, and naked, and in need of all things. And would you know what is not truth, inquire what doctrines are brought to the Bible to be compared with it, with a pride and a self-sufficiency, that scruple not to hew down any section of that book that will not quadrate with the favourite system; and prepared to proscribe the whole, if it assume any authority over the decisions of human reason. Do you still ask, "What is truth?" I answer,

III. *Truth is that which produces changes of character for the better.* God has told us plainly what is the design of his word. It was given to teach us, "that denying ungodliness, and every worldly lust, we should live soberly and righteously, and godly in this present evil world." Such then is the effect, that it is to be expected truth will have upon human character; hence that which has this effect is truth. It was the prayer of our Lord for his disciples, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." And who will deny, that men are fitted for heaven, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. This fact admitted, if we can ascertain what doctrines have been the means of making men better, we shall have learned what the truth is.

Where then do we look for the most frequent conversions? under what system? and under what men? The question amounts to this, What doctrines have been

preached, and believed, where the Spirit of God has the most frequently, and the most powerfully operated, in producing revivals? The men who have been the most favoured, in seeing the work of God prosper under their ministrations, and have turned many to righteousness, what is their creed? Do they deny the atonement? or do they place it at the foundation of all human hopes? Do they acknowledge the divine nature of Jesus Christ? Do they consider man so depraved, that his sacrifices are an abomination to the Lord: and his obstinacy such, that God must take away the heart of stone, and give a heart of flesh, or there will be no repentance, and no obedience? Do they believe, or not, that God is a Sovereign, and worketh all things after the counsel of his own will? Do they credit the fact, that God has prepared a quenchless fire, and a never-dying worm, for the punishment of the finally impenitent?

We do not deny that in some instances congregations have become acquainted with the truth, by other means than through the ministry placed over them, and that the truth thus acquired has produced awakenings; nor yet, that the *Bible alone* has been the means of saving men, notwithstanding the opposing influence of a false gospel. We ask what are the doctrines that have generated alarm, and induced men to fly for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel!

Will it be denied that these revivals, so called, have made men better. It will be admitted, that they have made some men worse, that the truth long and daringly resisted, has produced not a few of the most hardened and desperate men, that have ever lived. There *have been* sore and alarming instances of relapse, that have cast whole churches into deep distress.

But, this admitted, have not revivals produced very

noted and numerous cases of reform? Have not the profane, the intemperate, the proud, and the false, been rendered virtuous, by some power that operated at these seasons? Now if it was God who wrought, it was truth he used: and whether you own or not, that the power of God produced the changes witnessed, you will hardly deny that the truth was the means: for it is not more unscriptural, than unphilosophical, to believe that falsehood will generate virtue.

Ascertain then whether the reception or the rejection of any given doctrine, or system of doctrines, is more generally attended by a change of character for the better, producing sobriety, morality, and benevolence, and the fact will aid you in your search after truth. I know there is much boast of morality, where doctrines are current, that are plainly at war with what the Bible seems very clearly to teach, but I know too that such boast is vain. The virtue that thrives under error is proud, and selfish, and cold, and often very malignant, and cruel; makes but few and small sacrifices, and is at the best a mere polished and civilized idolatry. It may drop a tear over the sufferings of the *body*, and be prompt to cure temporary distress; but can look with the indifference of a statue at the ruins of the *moral world*, and feels not a pang nor utters a groan, at the sight of six hundred millions of souls sinking to perdition, and degraded and miserable all the way thither. It cares not who suffers through ignorance of God, nor is miserable through the lack of vision. We do not deny, if they like this picture, that such a morality *does prevail* where men have turned the truth of God into a lie.

But let us make *a high regard to the best interests of men*, the leading feature of morality, and then inquire where we find it. Does such a morality thrive

under what is termed evangelical truth, or where this system is scouted, and libelled, and proscribed? If we see men, on embracing these doctrines become *better*, then believe them true, but if *worse*, then you may believe them a lie. Do you ask me still, "What is truth?" I answer,

IV. *Truth is that which distresses, and often offends ungodly men.* The character of God, and his people as far as they are like him, is built on the truth. But unholy beings, men and devils, have a character bottomed upon falsehood. They feel and act as they do, because in their esteem a lie is the truth. Hence the truth is at war with their character, their conscience, their pleasures, and their hopes. It holds before them a mirror in which they appear ugly to themselves, and see their need of a better character, in order to be accepted of God. It shows them that their stronghold is a house of straw. It exhibits them as playing the fool with their own best interests. A mad man, who in a paroxysm of his disease has butchered his family, and half dispatched himself, and has waked to consciousness in the very act of suicide, is scarcely a sorer picture of wretchedness and ruin, than a sinner upon whose conscience there has been poured suddenly the light of truth. It shows him that he is labouring hard to fit himself for irrecoverable ruin; and is heaping treasure together for the last days. His character must be altered, or the light shut out that shows him its deformity.

Now assure yourselves what doctrines bring ungodly men into this condition of distress, and you learn what is truth. On the other hand, if you will ascertain what doctrines offend and grieve the *good man*, you will learn what is *not* truth. Let me appeal to that part of my

audience, who have yet no hope that they are born of God, but who have frequently felt alarm. On that night when you went home so unhappy from the place of worship, and wet your couch with tears, and roared, and was in anguish all night, what doctrine had been exhibited? Was it the entire depravity of the heart? or was it an attempt to prove, that you are not that lost and ruined being, which this pitiless orthodoxy would render you? Was it divine sovereignty? or a discourse that went to show, that when God had built the world he placed it without the limits of his empire, and left it to govern and watch over itself? Was it the doctrine of decrees? or an attempt to show that a sparrow may fall to the ground, and God *not* know it, and that the hairs of our head are *not* numbered? Was it election? or was it an effort to prove that the Father has not given any of our race to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that if he has, they may not come to him, and that many who do come to him may be cast out? Was it the doctrine of of ever-during future punishment? or a train of reasonings that went to prove that the great gulf had been bridged over?

Go on, my audience, and apply this rule to other doctrines, to whatever extent you please, it will help you greatly in determining what is truth. Let us suppose a case, or rather state one that *has* happened. A sinner lies on the dying bed. There goes to him one in the character of a minister of Jesus Christ. But he tells the dying man, that he has no occasion to be much alarmed, that his heart is not *radically* polluted, that he must receive baptism, and forgive his enemies, and be willing to die, and all will be well. He is baptized!! The minister goes on; God is merciful, and Christ has died for sinners: there can be no doubt but the dying

man will be soon in Abraham's bosom.—He retires, and another man, with far other views, takes his chair by the dying bed. He assures the poor man, that he has probably come to his last hours with a heart at enmity with God, and so obstinate in its enmity, that none but a power divine can subdue it; and that it must be sanctified very soon, or he perishes forever. Still God has made no promise that lays him under obligation to effect this change, hence the man's eternal life hangs upon uncovenanted mercy. True a Saviour has died for sinners, and God is merciful, infinitely merciful, but that atonement and that mercy, have conditions annexed, which must be complied with, or they avail nothing. The sinner must repent and believe in Jesus Christ; and God will give repentance unto life to whom he will, whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

I have thus given the *substance* of the instruction administered by the two legates. The dying man continues impenitent. Now *who* of the two gives him comfort, and *who* alarms and distresses him? He who gives comfort to one who is out of Christ, must deal in lies; he who distresses him, though he may not use the mildest, best language, has the presumption in his favour, that he pours in truth upon an ungodly mind. God requires that we say to the wicked, that it shall be ill with them, and a message like this will not give them comfort, unless it prove the means of their conversion. Hence the irresistible presumption is, that he who gives *pain* to the dying sinner, and not he who gives *comfort*, makes use of *truth*.

And what thus gives *pain*, is very liable to give *offence*. Men are proud, and when the truth, from the necessity of the case, bears against their character and conduct, they scowl. You cannot offer them mercy in

the style of Scripture, but you convey to them a threatening, if they believe not. The gospel intrudes upon the sinner's pleasures, and pours unwelcome light upon his conscience, and, as he esteems it, degrades his character; tells him of a judgment he is loth to think of, and predicts a doom he hates to anticipate, a hell whose fires he would gladly put out, where there await him weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Ah, the truth tears from the sinner all his hopes of heaven, pulls down about his head his refuge of lies, breaks his covenant with death, and annuls his agreement with hell, and leaves him the prey of despair, till he raises one believing look to the hills whence his help cometh; and sure as life, all this, if it does not save him, will *offend* him.

If, then, you would test the truth of a doctrine, propose it to ungodly men, and watch if it gives offence. What effect has divine sovereignty, decrees, and election, upon such men? If they offend, the presumption is that they are true. Go to that man standing in the door of that grog-shop, reeling and cursing, with a glass in his hand; and name one of these doctrines; will it please or offend him? will it calm or enrage him?

Let me take another view. Christians have been much of their life ungodly. Did they generally love these hard doctrines before conversion or since? The doctrine of universal salvation; do men more generally believe this doctrine before they are regenerated, or afterward? You may thus bring to the test any doctrine, or system of doctrines. That individual truth, or system of truths, which pleases more generally unsanctified men, is more likely to be false than other-

wise. Error loves its child *depravity*, and the child its mother.

I know that to make this experiment fairly, you must arrest attention. Men may be too stupid to be distressed by the truth, and may hold the truth in unrighteousness. The mass of impenitent sinners in our orthodox congregations, and who could not be persuaded to receive, and support, a loose and ungodly ministry, are on the side of truth, because they are thoughtless, or consider it disreputable to renounce the creed of their fathers. But every period of awakening draws out enmity, more or less, because it brings men to think. I doubt not but there is sufficient hatred to truth, in New England, to explode the gospel, and its ministry, and the Bible, and seal up the doors of every sanctuary, if God should remove restraint, and wicked men be generally aroused to thought, and see how at war truth is with their heart and their life.

There may be a kind of general acknowledgment of the truth, where it would be most cordially hated, were it so brought home to the conscience as to be strongly felt. Then it becomes manifest that the truth had previously floated merely upon the surface of the mind, and had not been opposed, because it had not been felt. Do you still inquire, "What is truth?" I answer,

V. *Truth is that which is consistent with itself, and inconsistent with all error.* Should two men appear in a court of justice, to bear witness to the truth, their testimony would agree, without any previous consultation. There might be many apparent discrepancies, but they could all be explained satisfactorily. Say

it is a case of assault, that happened several months since. One affirms that the attack commenced in a house, on the evening of such a day; at the hour of eleven; the other places the scene of attack without the doors of that house at the hour of twelve, and names another day of the week, another day of the month, and even another month. But the court perceives in a moment, that the attack might commence in the house, and be renewed without, and that one of the witnesses might mistake wholly the time. Hence, finally, their testimony may substantially agree.

Now although we would not place the seeming discrepancies of the Bible on the same footing, for here there could be no mistake, yet there *are many apparent discrepancies.* One apostle testifies that the *thieves*, implicating both, reproached the suffering Redeemer; another fixes the charge upon *one only;* while the truth probably is, that at the first both reviled, and finally but one; the other being sanctified; and the evangelists record what they saw and heard at different times. So when Saul was addressed by the Saviour on his way to Damascus; one account is, that those who journeyed with him, heard the voice but saw no man; while another asserts that they heard not the voice of him that spake. The truth no doubt is, that they heard a sound, but did not distinguish what was spoken. Many such apparent discrepancies are found in the sacred volume, serving however to corroborate its testimony. If men had agreed to lie, they would have been careful to have a perfect harmony in their statements, especially when their testimony was voluntary and deliberate. Truth is consistent with itself.

Now let us make application of the rule. If it be correct, then an entire change of heart is necessary

only on the supposition that the heart is totally depraved; if regeneration be entirely the work of God, then man does none of it; no promise could insure heaven to the believer, and still he be lost; if God foreknows an event, that event is certain; sin requires an infinite atonement, if, in its nature, it tends to infinite mischief: thus one truth is consistent with another.

But between truth and error there is no such harmony. No court can reconcile a true and false witness. Error thwarts the track of truth, and its own track. It is a body opaque, that cannot light its own way, while truth surrounds itself with the light necessary to guide its course.

Let us look at one case. I take this position; God is the implacable enemy of sin; now reconcile this with the idea that there is neither a judgment nor a hell. It then follows, that the vilest men are often taken to heaven first: the people of the old world were at rest in the bosom of the Lamb, while Noah and his family had yet to weather many a dark and dreary night upon a shoreless ocean; the Sodomites went all up to heaven, while Lot was left to wander upon the mountains; Judas was glorified before John; and all those who shorten their lives by debauchery are sooner at rest than the virtuous. To such results are we driven when we would reconcile truth with error.

Take another case. The heart till renewed in regegeneration is void of moral goodness. Now reconcile this with the idea that the unsanctified do any thing pleasing to God. The heart gives every moral action its character. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Hence a bad heart will give every moral act a bad character: the motives by which we act are in the heart,

but if the heart of the sons of men be full of evil, then every motive is bad; hence every deed instigated by such motive is bad. How then can sinners do any thing pleasing to God? Thus truth and error are at open war. They must not mingle in the same system, nor unite in governing the same heart; cannot have a place in the same Bible, can have no fellowship, no harmony. They are the two contending powers that have so long distracted this fallen world, and the war will continue, without truce or treaty, till one or the other is exterminated; and which must perish, it is not difficult to decide.

And I might add, that error is equally inconsistent with itself. There is no such thing as a system of error. I could as soon conceive of harmony made up of a combination of discords. Hence we need not wonder that those who depart from the simplicity of the gospel, are driven about with every wind of doctrine. It *must* be so. They can never so mend up their system, that it shall suit them; but will alter it, and alter it, till all truth is excluded, and it has become a scheme of infidel morality. So we conceive of some comet that will not be governed by the laws of gravitation, and wanders from system to system, till no other world can be safe in its vicinity, and no sun will lighten it, and finally it goes out beyond the reach of suns, and there is in reserve for it, the blackness of darkness forever. Ah, how infatuated men have been when they gave up one doctrine of the Bible, and supposed that it would not essentially alter their creed! By that act they cast themselves off from their anchorage, after which there was no guessing before what storm they would be driven, into what latitude borne, or upon what cliff be dashed, and broken, and destroyed. O that men would be

wise *sooner*, and fall on their knees, the moment they have taken up their pen to blot and interline their creed. It is only in the edifice of truth, that there can be a perfect unity from the foundation to the top-stone. Do you still inquire, "What is truth?" I answer,

VI. *Truth is that which will stand the test of a close examination.* A man reports to you a fact which he witnessed. You have some doubt, and demand particulars. He goes on to state when, and where, and how the event transpired. He tells you why he was there; who else were present; the hour of the day; how long he was there; how many were concerned in the matter;—in a word, he will readily answer any question you put to him. And makes every statement fearless of contradiction.

Now a lie will not stand this pressure. Ask the man who comes to you with *a false report* all these particulars, and you will soon perceive that although he has marked out several steps, yet beyond these he moves with hesitancy. He has the particulars of the lie to fabricate. Now all this will apply to gospel truth. Take an example.

Total depravity is proved by this text, "The carnal mind is enmity against God;" and this, "There is none that doeth good, no not one;" and this, "Every imagination of the thought of the heart is evil, only evil continually;" and this, "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil."

Now let us see if this doctrine will stand the test of a close examination. If it be true, men will be seen to act very basely; and this we see. If it be true, men will need restraint, and will act the worse, the less restrained;

and this is fact: "Thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldst." If it be true, nothing that the sinner does will please God: "Without faith it is impossible to please him." If it be true, God must renew the heart: "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." If it be true, the change will be great: "Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." If it be true, God must hate our native character: "He is angry with the wicked every day." If it be true, they will not relish it; and such is generally the fact. You may go on, and press the doctrine as much as you please, or any other doctrine in the system of truth, and it will stand. Not the surf-beaten rock, hat lines the shore of ocean, stands half so firmly as the truth. It will live and flourish, and will still be truth, when all its opposers have perished, and every rock is rolled from its bed.

And the truth will stand firmly without the aid of sophistry. It is when you attempt to establish a lie, that you must use false arguments. Hence there never was an orator, who could ably support the side of an argument, that is opposite to truth and righteousness. Take an example. He tries to prove that no plan guides the divine operations. But there are a thousand facts, and the whole Bible, and the best conclusions of reason, all confronting him. Hence he makes no advances, till he affixes to the doctrine he would oppose, some odious name, calls it election, and suggests some mischievous consequences if it prove true, and casts about the hated doctrine a cloud of darkness and mystecism, and then, when his hearers are highly impassioned, and so blinded by rage, as not to see the weakness and wickedness of the orator, he plies his false and worthless arguments. It would destroy man's free agency. It would

render the invitations of the gospel insincere. It would excuse every violation of the divine law. Now there is not one of these arguments worth a straw, if he had a candid auditory to enlighten. But one may as well attempt to convince a rock that it is hard, as to pour truth upon a mad congregation. The ear that should hear it is deaf, and the eye that should see it is blind, and what is worse than all, the heart that should feel it is biased.

But let one attempt to prove that God *has* a plan, and guides all his movements by it, and he may use solid and honest arguments. He may appeal to the unequivocal testimony of inspiration: to the attributes of God; to the impossibility of a wise intelligence operating without a plan; or to matters of fact, which show, unequivocally, that such a plan exists, and is going into rapid and successful operation. And when he has exhausted his substantial arguments, he need proceed no farther, for the truth is proved, and will stand without the prop of sophistry. And the same is true relative to any and every doctrine of the Bible. A mere schoolboy can reason better in support of truth, than the wisest philosopher, when he would prove the truth of a falsehood. The very father of lies himself could never defend, successfully, any one doctrine of his creed. You still ask me, "What is truth?" I answer,

VII. *Truth is that against which all opposition is weak.* It must have opposers, in every world where there is depravity. But the Patron of truth is the mighty God; hence all opposition is insignificant. Truth could never be checked in its progress, by all the terrors of the dungeon, or the agonies of the stake and the cross Every heretic that was executed during the reign of

intolerance, promoted the triumph, and widened the spread of truth. At every scene of persecution, other hearts were sanctified, and other witnesses rose, as it were from the ashes of the martyred, to erect again, higher and still higher, the standard of the cross, and vindicate, more and more triumphantly, the honour of truth, and the glory of God. Opposition to truth warms its advocates, and produces a reaction, that carries the war back into the territories of the foe, eclipses the brilliancy, and humbles the triumph of his boasted victories.

Were it not for the reluctance we feel that men should undo themselves forever, it could be wished, that error might ever have warm and able advocates, to call into action the friends of truth, and show the world that it has a light of its own, that can eclipse and consume every wandering star that would thwart its track. In its very nature truth is invulnerable and eternal. Its author is God, whose character and whose throne is built on it, and who has pledged all in him that is sacred, that it shall exist and flourish commensurate with himself.

Oh, that its enemies did but know their destiny. When they shall have done their best, and cried aloud to their gods, and leaped upon their altars, and wounded themselves till they are covered with their own gore; then God will speak, and fire will come from heaven to testify to his truth, and devour its adversaries. No warfare has ever been so unpromising as theirs. The victory has never hung in doubt an hour. When the foe has been intrenching himself, and was proud of his forces, and sure of the victory; and the friends of truth lay on their faces between the porch and the altar, and could only say, "Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not

thine heritage to reproach;" even then, angels were not afraid, nor God afraid, nor should faith have been afraid, that the truth might suffer. Do you still ask me, "What is truth?" I answer,

VIII. *Truth is that which never becomes obsolete, but is rendered the more illustrious by use.* It may at times seem obscured, and likely to become extinct, in some limited territory of this world, but it will come into credit again, and will pervade the very ground from which it seemed excluded. The human heart does not love it, and would destroy it, and has been making efforts to this effect ever since the apostacy; but the conscience, to whatever extent it has light, is on the side of truth, and often exerts an influence to give it countenance and currency, where it would otherwise be without a friend. Its light may be eclipsed, but cannot be extinguished. So the sun may suffer some little world to roll athwart its beams, and cut off a few fragments of its light from some other world, but the sun, when eclipsed, is not extinguished. While the ignorant multitude stand appalled at the brooding darkness, he emerges from behind the screen, and rolls and shines with unbroken velocity and undiminished lustre.

Some have believed, and many have hoped, that the Scriptures would one day become obsolete, and men be released from its obligations and its terrors. Poor souls, they think it a great grievance that there should be any sun to light the moral world. They would it were one unbroken night through all the territories of intellect. So we have known when the thief and the robber cursed the opening day as a nuisance, and were not ashamed to wish that the sun might cease to shine, and the moon and stars withhold their light. But the prayer of the thief

will not put the sun out, nor will the enemies of truth live to see the Scriptures perish. No, the *men* will perish, and the *arguments* that have stood in martial array against that book, while the book itself is destined to outlive all the nations, and will be in the hands, and deeply impressed upon the heart, of that last believer who shall rise to meet the Lord in the air. This great luminary of the moral world, will hold its station, and shine on in all its glory, and lighten and warm the beings it was sent to cherish, till the elect are all gathered in. Every doctrine of that book will outlive its foes, and will be embraced and loved by every believer that shall be sanctified through the truth. Wisdom is justified of her children. There is no danger, nor has there ever been, that any one doctrine of the Bible should be lost. No power but that which can build a world can stop truth in its course, and that power *will not*. Bury in one common grave every Bible that has ever been published, and let them lie till their mortal parts perish, still their doctrines, like so many imperishable gems, shall resist corruption, and emerge unhurt from the embers of the last conflagration.

By being controverted truth increases its lustre. The attacks made upon the doctrines of the reformation, gave them currency. Men would risk their lives to see that book which was so much the dread of some of the ruling powers, especially the powers spiritual. Thus the eyes of a blinded world were opened the more effectually upon the glorious gospel of the blessed God. And all the efforts that have been made since then, or that may be made against the truth hereafter, have had, and will have but this one effect, to establish its friends in the more perfect belief, and the more full enjoyment of the precious Bible.

Truth is in most danger when its foes are asleep, for then its friends sleep too. "While the bridegroom tarried *they all* slumbered and slept." To drive his people to their post, God sometimes gives their enemies a temporary triumph; never, however, leaving it doubtful in the eye of faith where victory will rest. When infidelity threatened to deluge the world, God raised up a standard. And when it crept within the pale of the churches,

> ("As when a prowling wolf,
> Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey,
> Watching where shepherds pen their flocks at eve,
> In hurdled cotes amid the field secure,
> Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold;
> Or as a thief bent to unhoard the cash
> Of some rich burgher, whose substantial doors,
> Cross-barr'd and bolted fast, fear no assault,
> In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles:
> So clomb this first grand thief into God's fold;
> So since into his church lewd hirelings climb,")

An eye divine watched all its movements. And its defeat is now as certain, as when it libelled the entrance of the grave-yard, and daringly proscribed the Nazarine. God can recognize his enemies under whatever vestments they may conceal themselves. It requires only common faith to predict, that the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ will not long harbour in their communion errors that dethrone their Master. In the present, and in every future conflict, the result will be as in the past. God will not suffer a flood of error to pour in, mightier than the standard he will lift up against it. He will continue for ever to be the friend and advocate of truth, and should the time again come when he must blot out a world to recover its influence, he has all his stores of wrath ready. Do you still ask me, "What is truth?" I answer,

Finally, *Truth is that against which an impenitent world is armed with objections.* I mention this characteristic of truth, because many conceive that nothing can be truth that meets with opposition. They act on the false supposition, that the world is friendly to truth, will readily embrace it when distinctly seen, and will object to nothing that is truth. Hence if they hear a doctrine objected to, in the belief of which they have been ever so well established, they feel it to be their duty to doubt its truth. And yet there is no doctrine against which there may not be brought a variety of objections. In the affairs of common life it would not answer to act on this principle, else we should believe nothing. There stands a tree by your door, and you affirm that it grew there. I object to your position, first, that such a mass of timber could never rise to such a height without hands; secondly, that earth cannot produce wood, as every effect must have the nature of its cause: and thirdly, the tree was never seen to grow. But do you doubt whether the tree grew there, because I have offered three objections to your faith? And if I could offer thirty, instead of three, would it shake your confidence? Then why are the precious doctrines of the gospel to be yielded on the first attack?

The fact is, and it is a fact that we ought to know, the truth is far more likely to be assailed with objections than error. There are more who are engaged in opposing *truth* than *error*, perhaps ten to one. None but the true believer finds a real interest and a real pleasure in supporting the truth, while the great mass of ungodly men are strongly in the opposition. Hence all those whose hearts are at enmity with truth, are engaged, and have been ever since the apostacy, in fabricating objec-

tion to truth, while very few have endeavoured to meet these objections with a proper answer.

And moreover when objections to truth have been invented, there are *ten* who will circulate them, where *one* will make the same sacrifice to disseminate the truth. Hence when a book or pamphlet full of error leaves the press, many because they hate the truth will purchase it, and give it circulation; but if there follow it an able answer, there will be few, perhaps none, who will make a similar sacrifice. Christians *should not be so remiss*, but it was long since declared, that "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." The fact then must be that *ten* will become familiar with objections to truth, where *one* will hear those objections answered. Against the truth then there will stand more objections than against error, hence a doctrine strongly, and frequently objected to by unbelievers, has presumptive evidence of its truth. And perhaps, in a world like ours, truth has no test more infallible.

We shall be sadly mistaken, however, if we suppose that a mere profession will make men the friends of truth, and that all is error to which those who make profession are opposed. It not unfrequently happens that truth finds its bitterest enemies within the pale of the communion, and even in the sacred ministry. As there was a Judas in the apostleship, so in the gospel ministry there are men, O that it were not so, who bend all their energies to betray the design and to pollute the honours of their Lord.

But let us apply the rule. What doctrines are constantly assailed by unsanctified men? What doctrines are the drunkard, the liar, the profane, the swindler, and

the Sabbath-breaker, ever prepared to repel? What doctrines has it been considered improper to preach, because of the numerous objections that stand against them, and which are supposed to destroy their usefulness? Ascertain those facts and you learn what is truth. I close with

REMARKS.

1. *We see why the Bible in all its parts is so entirely harmonious, and has so long continued in use.* Writers so numerous, and so separated as to time, place, education, and habit, could not have written so harmoniously, but from the fact that they all wrote truth, and nothing else, and truth is consistent with itself. And if the sacred volume by divine direction should be continued, and an additional prophecy or epistle be written in every future age down to the last day, they would all agree. Each under the guidance of the Holy Ghost would write only unadulterated truth, and truth is consistent with itself. Hence the word of God, unlike every other book, can never thwart its own track, and can never become obsolete.

2. *We see why no other book can outlive a few short generations.* All others, although containing some truth, contain also error sufficient to bring them soon into disuse. Error is ever transitory. Let a book have been written if you please in the first age of the world, be it inspired or not, and let it contain nothing but truth, and that truth important, and it shall be fit for use till the funeral of the world, and shall be new and interesting to every succeeding generation of men. The character of God is pledged for the security of truth,

and nothing else. It is as old as God, and will have a being commensurate with his. Its very nature is eternal. Truth is the reflected image of being and of fact. Hence ever since there was any being or any fact, and while these endure truth must live. But error has attached to it no such immortality. Perhaps it would not be saying too much to assert that every uninspired volume, has attached to it error sufficient to sink it sooner or later into the grave.

3. *We are now prepared to say, that one cannot reject the truth and be innocent.* The marks of truth are so visible, that one cannot mistake it but from choice. Its features are all prominent and visible, and must be familiar to every man who has made a proper use of his eyes and his understanding. Hence to not know the truth or embrace error is sin, and argues a heart unsanctified. He who loves God must wish to know and love the truth. Christ viewed the truth of such importance, that he came into the world to declare the truth, and will now frown upon the man who diminishes its value.

It is absurd to suppose that truth has a character so doubtful that it cannot be known. If God has placed his statute-book in our hands, he will expect us to be familiar with the laws of his kingdom. He has not furnished us an unintelligible code. He has not suspended our destiny on a belief of the truth, and yet left it so uncertain *what we should believe*, that it is no crime to believe a lie. The Holy Ghost would not inspire for us a volume which we cannot understand. If God sanctifies his people through the truth, there is not the same hope that those are bound for heaven who believe a lie, as those who believe the truth. We cannot be sanctified

through that truth which we do not embrace. Hence it would seem that it must be fatally criminal to reject the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel.

4. If the definitions which I have given of truth be correct, sinners ought to wish to hear those doctrines which they do not relish, and which fill them with distress, for none else are true. It would be easy to preach so as never to distress or offend impenitent men, but it would not be the gospel, and the preaching would be useless. They would sleep under it till they waked in perdition. They would neither quarrel nor repent. There are such preachers, and the effect of their labours is exactly what we should expect. Their "burden of the Lord" is a mere heathen morality, and the best effect a mere reform of some grosser vice, leaving the moral character unbleached, and the heart unchanged.

But it should be the wish of perishing men to hear another gospel, one that will alarm their fears, cut off their false hopes, arouse their consciences, and renew their hearts. It is pleasant to find that men are *pleased*, but far more important to find that they are *sanctified*. And those act a very weak part, who are conscious of impenitence, and yet prefer a gospel that is not truth, and can never point them to heaven.

Finally, the subject will help us to account for the stability of the Christian character. It has its foundation in truth, the same that is the basis of the divine character, and of the throne itself of God. So the character of angels, and of all holy beings is built on the truth. Hence a holy character will differ as to its permanency, from the character of the sinner, as much as the truth differs from falsehood. Every Christian principle is some truth of God, every grace some impress of truth upon

the heart. Hence we expect the Christian character, and no other, to have permanency, unless that truth could become mutable on which it is founded. Christ styles himself *the truth*, and is that rock on which his people build their character and their hopes: "Christ in you the hope of glory."

Hence the believer, though "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation," has a permanency of character, from the fact, that God sanctifies him through the truth. He grows in grace and in the knowledge of the truth; and to whatever moral stature he attains, truth secures his standing, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Thus it is made certain that the saints shall never fall.

But we do not wonder that those who have no such idea of the permanency of truth, doubt whether the believer will assuredly persevere. Those who suppose him to build his house upon the sand, must fear, lest when the floods come and the winds blow, its foundations be removed, and it fall. But he builds upon a rock, firm as heaven itself, and we shall see him safe, when every other rock, but that which he makes his foundation, is melted down; and when those who have not built on Christ and on truth, "shall call upon the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."

May God bless his truth, to the sanctification of his people; and make them zealous to learn it, and to propagate it. May he give us a high esteem for our Bibles, and Sabbaths, and sanctuaries, and a preached gospel, by the aid of which we learn truth. And may he sanc-

tify his ministers, and leave none of them to "depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." And may he through the truth glorify his own name, and prepare a great multitude, that no man can number, to worship about his throne forever and ever. Amen.

SERMON XXXV.

THE FATHER THE PROTOTYPE OF THE SON.

John xiv. 8, 9.

Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?

THE doctrine which our Lord here intended to teach is evidently this, that in himself dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. It was impossible to know *him* and not know the *Father*, to *see* him and not *see* the Father. In him the divinity was embodied, and thus, in the only possible way, brought down to human view. He was God manifest in the flesh. In no other case was it possible that any man should see God.

In our ideas of the Supreme Being, if our views are correct, we conceive not of a being possessed of locality and visibility, but of attributes dwelling in one incomprehensible, and infinite mind, whose duration applies to every point of time, and whose presence to every portion of space. When we think of him, or pray to him, we conceive of a junction of every great and amiable attribute. We worship a cluster of perfections which, as to the mode of their existence, lays the foundation for the distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It will be my object to show that these perfections, which, when associated, constitute the object of our worship, were all found in the Saviour, were attached to the man Christ Jesus, and prove him to be truly divine. If in him some of these attributes are less conspicuous than

others, it is because his connexion with human nature, and the point of time at which we view him, rendered it difficult, if not impossible, that such attributes should be developed. Every perfection which it was possible that he should exhibit clearly, was exhibited. and all others which enter into our ideas of God, are said to belong to him, and are inferrible from what he did. The truth at which I aim is this, If we find in Christ Jesus every attribute of Jehovah, and if these attributes appear not to be borrowed but to belong to him as originally his own, it is our duty to own his divinity, and worship him as our Lord and our God. I notice how freely the Scriptures ascribe to the Saviour these attributes.

For instance *Omniscience*. The most superficial observer of the history of the Lord Jesus Christ cannot fail to have noticed how perfectly naked and open to his inspection were all creatures and all things. Peter came to him to inquire respecting their obligations to pay tribute. Our Lord, it is said, prevented him, i. e. he knew his errand and anticipated his request. He sent him to the sea, and directed him to angle for a fish which had swallowed a piece of money, and would be at the shore ready to be taken when Peter should cast in his hook. Here was displayed in one act intuitive knowledge of the natural and moral world, such as can belong to none but God.

When, in fulfilment of an ancient prophecy, he would enter Jerusalem amid the hosannas of the multitude, he sent two of his disciples to bring an ass which they would find tied in a certain place, and whose owner was friendly to their Lord, and would readily send his beast to do him honour. Here was exhibited an omniscience which can belong to none but God.

So while Nathaniel was under the fig-tree he saw

him. He knew of the sickness and death of Lazarus, although he was at a distance, and had received no intelligence of these events through any human communication. When he would eat the passover, he knew that a man friendly to his religion would go for a pitcher of water, and would meet the disciples whom he had sent to prepare for the feast, and offer them for this purpose an apartment of his house. He knew the hearts of all about him; that the scribes and pharisees had come to catch him in his words; that the disciples were contending for superiority, and that Judas had it in his heart to betray him.

Omnipresence, as distinguished from omniscience, was an attribute which could not be displayed in connexion with humanity without bringing the latter into doubt. If at the same moment that he was teaching the multitude on Mount Olivet, he had also been known to be in the same employment by the sea of Galilee, his cotemporaries would have doubted whether he had a human as well as a divine nature, or would have believed that there were more than one Messiah; and either of these errors would have been dangerous. Hence we are not to expect to see in the history of his life any evidence of this attribute, but must learn that he possesssed it from what he says of himself, or from what inspired writers say of him.

His *Almighty Power* is conspicuous in every part of his history. The waves of the sea were calm at his word; he created bread to feed the multitude; every disease yielded to his touch; devils were dispossessed at his bidding; and the lame, the deaf, the blind, and the dumb were relieved at his command. His voice waked the dead, restored the dying, and fed the living. Of his

almighty power there cannot be a doubt with such as credit his history.

And we see some traces of his sovereignty, although this attribute is evidently concealed by the very design of his incarnation. He came to teach the truth, to save men's lives, and not to destroy them; to explain, rather than cloud the purposes of heaven. Still in many things that he did he concealed his motives, and gave no account of his purpose. He performed cures in Capernaum, and none in Nazareth, where he was bred, and where they claimed a right to his mercy. He blasted the innocent fig-tree because it did not yield him fruit, while yet the time of figs was not come. He scourged the market-men from the temple, and refused to tell them by what authority he acted. He selected his apostles from the fishing-boat and the shop of the tentmaker, passing by the scribes, and pharisees, and lawyers. And in all his distributions of grace, he chose whom he would to love and follow him, and left whom he would to perish.

He acted with an independence which bespoke him the sovereign Lord of his own kingdom. He took counsel of none. His own apostles he made acquainted with his purposes no farther than was necessary for their comfort and usefulness. Many of the most decisive steps relative to his kingdom he appears to have taken without giving any indications that he acted by a wisdom not his own, or a power not his own. His infinity, his eternity, his ubiquity, and his spirituality, as they are properties of divinity, were in a measure concealed by his humanity, or were attributes which could not be clearly exhibited in a point of time. We know that he possessed them all, but we gather this knowledge from the testimony of Scripture.

His *wisdom*, which forms the connecting link between

his natural and moral attributes, was conspicuous in all he did. His very enemies acknowledged that he taught as never man taught. We think we see a supernatural wisdom in all his plans, in the clearness with which he exhibited truth, the promptness with which he answered every question, the acuteness with which he silenced his opponents, and the success which attended all his movements. A wisdom more than human, his enemies being judges, guided all the operations of his kingdom.

His *holiness* he displayed in his own perfect obedience to the law, in his unqualified approbation of the obedience of others, and his frowns upon every transgressor. In his determination not to destroy the law but to fulfil it, and in his dying to fulfil its penalty in behalf of those whom his mercy would save, he gave the strongest possible testimony that he was holy as God is holy.

His *justice* was less conspicuous than many other moral attributes, because his errand into our world was to snatch rebels from its power by his own blood. He would not be a judge between a man and his brother, and would not condemn the adulteress. And yet never did any one so strictly observe the rules of righteousness as he did, and never had those rules been so clearly exhibited as we find them in his instructions. The grand rule embracing all others, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," was never exhibited till it dropped from his lips. Thus, not to mention that in promotion of justice he laid down his life, it is manifest that he made it a first law of his kingdom that justice should be done to all beings.

His *truth* and *faithfulness* are without a parallel. What he said always accorded with strict veracity. All his promises he fulfilled, and every prophecy is sure to be accomplished. Never did he speak of things past,

present, or future, but his language accorded with fact; and if all men are liars he must have been more than human. His whole life was a perfect comment upon his own assertion that he came into the world to declare the truth.

His *goodness* and his *mercy* none could ever doubt. He spent his life to make the wretched happy, and died to save them from endless misery. He mourned and wept over those who would not be made happy, and prayed in his last hour that his murderers might be forgiven.

Thus every attribute of divinity which could be exhibited in connexion with human nature, and in a point of time such as was his public ministry, was clearly displayed as inherent in the Lord Jesus Christ.

If we hear it said that he grew in wisdom, and in stature, and in favour with God and man; if we find him receiving intelligence like other men, and praying as he taught them to pray, this only proves, what no one denies, that he was strictly and properly a man as well as God. His humanity would have been doubted if in every thing but sin he had not exhibited the properties of human nature. Hence he hungered, and thirsted and was weary; he was grieved, he wept, he prayed, he bled, he sweat, and he suffered. All this must be to render him a man. And yet he could create the very bread for which he hungered, and the wine for which he thirsted; could sustain his own weakness, and take up the life he laid down. He could do for himself the very things which he asked the Father to do for him. While he lay in the manger, and while he hung on the tree, he still sustained the government of the world, and was the mighty God, the everlasting father, the prince of peace.

And it seems to us that these opposite attributes must meet in one who is both God and man. Why because we see weakness shall we deny his deity, rather than deny his humanity, because we see him possessed of infinite power. Some have taken one side of this question and some the other. There have been many who have denied his humanity, and we live in a day when others are attempting to strip him of his divinity. But the prophets foresaw in the child that should be born a junction of divine and human attributes. He was the mighty God, and yet he was to hang upon a tree; he was to be a man of sorrows, and yet Jehovah in addressing him styles him the man that is my fellow; he was made under the law, and yet the government of the universe was upon his shoulders. And what the prophets thus foretold is manifest in all his history. He could still the sea, and yet was in an agony on the approach of the hour of his dissolution; he could raise the dead, and yet died himself.

Unable to see how these different attributes can be in the same person, some have asserted, and would have us believe, that all that was more than human were mere borrowed attributes; that Jesus was a man like other men, or at least a mere creature, and that God granted him for the time being divine attributes. Now we read that God will not give his glory to another; but whether God is not believed while he thus asserts, or whether men have discovered that as a loan is not a gift, so God may permit a creature to use temporarily attributes which are not permanently his, I leave you to judge. We are reminded, I know, that prophets and apostles wrought miracles, did what mere men unassisted could not do, in other words, for a time endowed with supernatural power; and the question is triumphantly asked, Wherein do

the cases differ. The prophets and apostles were men, mere men, yet were empowered to do what belonged to the prerogatives of Jehovah, and what else is tru of the Lord Jesus Christ? With regard to these assertions I remark,

1. The Lord Jesus Christ acted as if these attributes which he exhibited were his own. He did not exhibit any signs of dependence on the will of another to enable him to do his mighty works. When he stilled the storm he merely said, "peace, be still." When he dispossessed the demoniacs he commanded them to go out. When he healed diseases he took an attitude highly independent, "I will, be thou whole." When he delivered predictions he did not say, as the prophets did, "Thus saith the Lord." When he raised the dead his language was, "Lazarus come forth." He spoke of what *he* had done, and would do. He associated himself with the Father, and said, "We will come to him and make our abode with him." And when others spoke of what he had done, he never disclaimed the praise, or referred them to God as the author of these works. When he had communicated blessings to the sufferers he permitted them to give him all the praise. Now all this would have been unpardonable impudence in a creature the most exalted. There was never seen any thing like it in the prophets or the apostles. They used the power of working miracles as a borrowed attribute, and constantly ascribed all the glory to God. If others offered to worship them, they shrunk from the honour and declared themselves to be mere men.

2. The Lord Jesus Christ assured his disciples that the attributes he employed *were his own*, and the praise *his due*. He assured them that he was one with the Father, and that it was the duty of all men to honour

the Son even as they honour the Father. He assured them that he had power on earth to forgive sins, and encouraged them to apply to him for pardon. He spoke of being in the Father in the same sense that the Father was in him. If then he was a mere creature, and had no honour or power but that which was loaned and temporary, he certainly betrayed his trust as no agent ever did before, and accumulated about himself the glory due to him who sent him.

3. It is certain that beings in all worlds viewed him with a respect which it would seem could not have been his due had he appeared great in only borrowed attributes. We hear the Father say, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." The disciples addressed their prayers to him, called him their Lord, and committed their spirits into his hand. Said Peter, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." Devils did him honour, feared his power, and trembled at his approach. The Jews understood him to assert that he was equal with God. And he seems to have permitted all about him to retain their high views of his person and character.

4. The Lord Jesus Christ speaks of himself, and is spoken of, as possessing these attributes before he came in the flesh and since his ascension. Said he, "Before Abraham was I am." And said an apostle, with reference to him, "For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him." And he is represented as continuing to govern the world as mediator till the judgment, when he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father. Still, however, he is to be worshipped equally with the Father for ever, and will doubtless for ever reign with him. There will

continue to be ascribed to him "Power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Now who can believe that God can loan to a mere creature all his attributes, and give assurance that he shall enjoy them, and the honours they attract to him, forever? What absurdity can be more glaring? Hence what a rotten and miserable scheme it is which thus degrades the Redeemer and robs the gospel system of all its glory.

That still as mediator he acted in a delegated capacity, we know and are not disposed to deny. That in this character he was inferior to the Father, or acted under him, none will dispute. But that still he is invested with all the rights of Jehovah, and that every attribute of the true God is his without derivation, or loan, or bequest, is to me as manifest as that any other doctrine of the Bible is true.

The scheme of reasoning which vests the Redeemer with borrowed attributes, would throw us afloat on points the most obvious. How can we know that the being which we call man is any other than a brute beast vested for a few days with the loan of intelligence? He may to-morrow rot and perish like the ox. *We* do not use the power of reason, more as if it were an inherent property of our nature, than did the Lord Jesus Christ the high and holy attributes which come into view in his history. It would seem to me far easier to doubt whether men had any other than a borrowed intelligence, than to doubt the deity of Christ. In infancy man seems like a mere animal, and often he reaches a similar state in old age. How can we know, then, that there awaits us any other existence beyond the grave than a mere beastly existence, if any. True intelligence was attached to us for a time, and we hoped to think and reason forever,

but this may all be fallacy on the principle that we oppose. Men have been styled angels in disguise, but we have, it seems, arrived at the conclusion that they are *brutes* in disguise, and may soon lay aside that intelligence which assimilates us to the angels.

REMARKS.

1. The subject may inspire God's people with confidence. The Saviour, we trust, is the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace. He is doubtless able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him. How can we distrust such a Saviour? or be ashamed of such a Saviour? or live in the neglect of such a Saviour? What a glory does his Godhead give to the scheme of redemption. Those whose Saviour is a man or angel may well yield to gloom and despondency; but he whose Saviour built and will judge the world, is the mighty God, has the keys of hell and of death, may cast off every fear, may rejoice and be happy.

2. The subject may show us how great is the crime of rejecting the Saviour. If God himself would come down to save us, our salvation must be an important object, and our ruin an incalculable loss. And how daring the impudence of disregarding a message brought to us from heaven by the Son of God! How tremendous must be the ruin of gospel sinners!

3. The subject may help us to try our religion. If in Jesus Christ we see the whole of the divine character, we may by discovering whether we love him, know whether we love the Father.

SERMON XXXVI.

THE HONEST AND FAITHFUL MINISTRY.

2 *Corinthians* iv. 1, 2.

Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

THE ministry of the reconciliation is an office peculiar as to its responsibility, its trials, its honours, and its enjoyments. We are placed in the office through the instrumentality of men, but have our commission from heaven. We negotiate a reconciliation between God, and a rebel world. Men are *saved* by our ministry, if we do our duty, if we are unfaithful they are *lost*. If we give them not the timely alarm, we must answer for their blood. We must meet our hearers in the last day, at the judgment seat, and must know, when no mistake can be corrected, what has been the bearing of our ministry upon their everlasting destiny.

Hence we must do our duty, at the risk of interest, reputation, and life. Under every dispensation, the messengers of God have but one plain track, they must hazard the danger of being faithful. Jeremiah might not withhold his message, when he must write it in a dungeon, when he must anathematize the monarch who imprisoned him, and when his message would impeach his loyalty, and his patriotism, and endanger his life. Paul must do his duty in the face of stripes, the dungeon, and the cross. The hope that we can fully please

the holy God, who sends us, and the disloyal to whom we are sent, is a fruitless hope; and none but the traitor will ask, whose pleasure he shall seek. If we had no interest of our own to risk, the honest man would aim to do his Master honour. But personal perdition hangs over us, if we compromise the honours of our Lord. Men *should* be pleased with us when we do our duty, but men are not what they *should be*, else they had needed no gospel. The same depravity that prompts them to hate the government of Jehovah, renders them hostile to any conditions of peace, that will consist with his honour. Hence the minister of Christ, who cultivates a bending conscience, and is seen carefully providing for himself, at the expense of his Master, is of all men the most miserable, and the most contemptible.

But upon a ministry thus exposed, God has poured the highest honours. Not the gospel simply, but the gospel in the lips of men, he has pledged himself to use as the grand instrument of redeeming the world. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Not the very angels, who minister to those who shall be the heirs of salvation, have a commission more dignified. We are workers together with God, in laying the foundation and rearing the superstructure of a spiritual temple, whose topstones are to be laid with shouting, Grace, grace, unto it!

And with the *responsibility* and the *trials* of the office, God has mingled not only *honours*, but *enjoyments*. The work is pleasant. To study divine truth and proclaim the divine honour; to be conversant with sacraments and Sabbaths, with prayer and praise, is living, if the heart be right, hard by the Oracle of God. And when the work is done, the *reward* is great.

They that turn many to righteousness are to shine in the kingdom of their father, and as the stars forever and ever.

The apostle in the context had been commending his office: had showed, by various arguments, that it was more honourable than a ministry under the law. The law he denominates the *letter*, the gospel the *spirit*. *That* was the ministration of condemnation and death; *this* the ministration of the *Spirit*, and the ministration of *righteousness*. The *legal* ministration was *temporary*, but that of the *gospel* remains a *lasting* and *permanent* establishment. Hence Moses, conscious that he was the minister of a dispensation that would soon be eclipsed by one more glorious, veiled his face. But the heralds of the gospel may use great plainness of speech, as they proclaim a system in which there is nothing dark or mysterious. The true light has shined; the veil is taken away, and we now behold the glory of God, not enveloped in clouds and darkness, but with open face as in a glass, shining in the face of Jesus Christ, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

And while we gaze upon this brightness, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory. And all is accomplished by the Spirit of the Lord, else the world had abode still in its native hideous darkness. Thus does the apostle, when he contemplates the dispensation of which he is a minister, rise to a tone of triumph, where language and figure are exhausted. Therefore, says he, seeing we have this ministry, we faint not. The office is so dignified, that no trials shall shake our confidence, no onset subdue our courage. We will neither use dishonesty, craft, or deceit, but commend ourselves to every man's conscience, by manifesting the truth. Thus interesting is the attitude in which the

apostle places himself, and all who after him should publish salvation to a dying world. Following the train of thought he suggests, I remark,

I. *The mercy of God, qualifies men to be his ministers.* The very messengers he employs are by nature hostile to the truths and glories which the gospel reveals, and to the temper and duties it enjoins. The character of God and of the Saviour displeases them. There cluster in the Godhead the very attributes that render character unlovely to the carnal mind. We naturally spurn the kingdom that God erects, and the heaven he reveals. All that was odious in the law, and more yet, we see in the gospel, till the eyes of our understandings are enlightened. It contains a law as rigid, as that which issued from the flames of Sinai, while it digs a *deeper pit*, and kindles a *more consuming fire* than were employed to avenge the broken law of Moses.

We are by nature like our hearers, the prey of a carnal mind, that is not subject to the law of God. Hence, till the grace of God renew us, how disqualified are we to be ministers of the reconciliation! But of just such men, sanctified, he makes ministers. He forgives them, and loves them, and they are then called to plead with rebels, just such as they were themselves up to the hour of the new birth. They have but just quitted the standard of revolt, and lo! they are seen standing hard by the host they have abandoned, proclaiming a pardon in the name of the Lord Jesus. Paul had gone to lay waste that very church, which a few days afterward it was his honour and his joy to edify. The devourer was caught with the very prey in his teeth, and was made a lamb. The disciples were afraid of him; nor can we wonder: a few days gone and he was a fiend; and very much

so of all Christs ministers. We mingled with the congregation of the ungodly, and could resist the kindest entreaties of a pitying Redeemer. Not one of all the multitude had a conscience more polluted, or a temper more revolting. If grace has sanctified us, how surprising our escape. *Perdition* we deserved, but are made the messengers of life. What a humiliating retrospect! One look behind, covers us with shame, cast we that look but through a little space. Then the overtures of the gospel, which we now proclaim, were like music to the deaf adder. Some of us perhaps were pressing on to perdition like Paul *in the very van* of that multitude which now it is our effort to save. On this point I hardly know how to say enough. We were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." We "walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

And we had a *mind* as *benighted*, as was the *heart depraved*. Whether the apostle had reference or not to the supernatural gifts, by which he and his fellows had become qualified to serve God in the gospel, we may well ascribe to his grace any small degrees of preparation in us for such an embassy. That gospel which it has become our duty and our delight to publish, little as we now understand it, was once still less understood. The Bible was a dead letter. Neither was the mind imbued with its doctrines, nor the memory stored with its facts, nor the tongue used to its dialect. It seems incredible, when we look as it were but to yesterday, and recollect how gross was our ignorance of the gospel, that we should now be the teachers of that same religion

to the multitudes who are perishing as we were for lack of knowledge. But the grace of God furnished us the means of improvement, and poured in the few rays of light, covered as we still are with ignorance, by the aid of which light we are introduced into an office similar to that which once was filled by the Son of God.

But the grace of God was still conspicuous, else our *unworthiness* had debarred us from a situation so sublime and so honoured. Might we but have occupied the obscurest place in God's house, been only door-keepers, it had been more than we deserved. The shame of having been totally depraved, and the guilt of having stood in the ranks of revolt so long, the habits of indolence we had acquired, and the still remaining passions, and prejudices, and the whole catalogue of moral plagues, deep rooted in our nature—all seemed to forbid us the occupancy of a station so honoured. God has indeed committed the treasure of the gospel to earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of him and not of us. How well does the language of the prophet become us. "Behold, Lord, I cannot speak, for I am a child." And that of the apostle, "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

And where is it that God has put us? Into almost the very same office once filled by prophets and apostles, and even by the Lord Jesus himself. He has emancipated slaves, and sent them to invite back a strayed world. He has placed us on the ramparts of his Zion, and has entrusted the prosperity of his kingdom, the honour of his government, the vindication of his law, and the glories of his name, to our sleepless, and watchful, and devoted fidelity. On our way to the place of

execution, and the haltar about our necks, he hailed us, and pardoned us, and now here we stand, between the condemned, and the arm of justice, between the burning glories of the Godhead, and the wretches whom his ire threatens to consume. We are occupying the station that Moses filled, while Israel were dancing around the golden calf; or that of David while he offered sacrifice on the threshing floor of the Jebusite; or that of Abraham when he sent up his last petition in behalf of the devoted cities—to turn away the wrath of heaven, to stay the plague, to ward off the storm of fire, and save, if it be possible, the abandoned transgressor.

Connected with our fidelity, are the everlasting hosannas of a multitude that no man can number, or with our neglects, the weepings and wailings of the damned. Ah, why did the holy God attach so high an office to beings so debased. Why did he not commission angels, who would have been faithful, and who were worthy of his honours. They would have brought no pollution with them, would have made no compromise of truth, would have exhibited no dire instances of apostacy, would have seen eye to eye, and might have gathered in the elect from the ranks of revolt, leaving wholly behind that multitude of hypocrites, who now pollute the ordinances of God. Well may we exclaim, "I am a worm and no man," and ascribe, with the apostle, our appointment to the work, and our equipment for it, all our success in it, and the reward, if any should be ours, to the grace of God.

II. *The ministry of the reconciliation is an office big with trials.* This we should infer from its very nature. We are the agents of negociation, between God, a holy and a good Jehovah, and men who hate his cha-

racter, his government, and his glory. We preach a gospel which, till men are sanctified, they cannot love. We are directed to describe their character, in all its odiousness, and show that they have been unreasonable and vile in every principle, and in every act of their revolt. We must warn them of a coming moment when all their sin and their shame must be uncovered. We dare hide from them no part of the truth, whether they will hear or forbear: must show them that not merely is their conduct offensive to God, but every imagination of the thought of the heart is evil, only evil continually. We must inculcate principles that violate every inbred sentiment of their hearts, and press maxims, and doctrines and duties, that give their whole conduct the lie, and cover their whole character with guilt and pollution. We must assure them that, as God is true it will be ill with the wicked in every stage of their being, and in whatever world God may place them. We must uncover the pit before them, must prophesy evil concerning them, must say loudly and fearlessly, that the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God, where their worm shall not die, nor their fire be quenched.

But it needs no prescience to feel assured that all this will not please. Men are not disposed to have their characters laid bare, and their hopes destroyed. The refuge of lies where they have taken sanctuary, they will not allow us with impunity to demolish. The god of this world persuades them that *he* is their *enemy* who thus beforehand brands them with the marks of perdition.

And while we are thus liable to offend, we depend on them for support. While every doctrine we preach, and every duty we urge, and every woe we announce, are at issue with the strongest biases of their hearts, we

expect them to clothe our children, and fill our board with bread. While they are in the very act of doing us a kindness, we may see them violate the law of God, and may be under the odious necessity of returning the favour with reproof.

Hence trials come as certainly as death. If we watch the interest we are set to watch, and cannot be bribed to perfidy, there will grow thorns in our path, and we shall wet our couch with tears. Hence the fact that the Lord's servants have been stoned, have been sawn asunder, have been tempted, have been slain with the sword, have wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, been destitute, afflicted, tormented. Hence the scenes of persecution that fill the pages of ecclesiastical history, the agonies of the cross, the fires of the stake, the inquisitorial dungeons, and the whole catalogue of plagues, that have borne off the stage the armies of the martyrs.

III. *This same ministry furnishes an antidote to the wo it generates.* It is, of all the appointments of the court of heaven, the first. The leader of Israel had a commission less dignified. He was the minister of a transient service, promulgated a temporary economy, was conversant with types and symbols. He released men from the chains of a human and temporary bondage, led them to an earthly Canaan, and built them a perishable sanctuary. But all these were the mere shadows of good things to come. Ours is the office, not of *typifying*, but of *substantiating ;* not of *predicting*, but of *narrating ;* not of breaking *the bands of a temporary bondage*, but the *league* with *death*, and the *agreement* with *hell ;* not of leading men to a paradise of hills and brooks of water, but to a city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens ; not to a crumbling

material sanctuary, but to the very throne itself of God. Under the ministration we occupy, Sinai blazes not with wrath, but with glory. God is seen not through a veil but with open face; "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

Such the office; every trial is light. He who may fill the first embassy in a kingdom, will suffer any privations, will risk any dangers, will endure any trials, will submit to any hardships. He will traverse, with such a commission, the dreariest heaths, and the stormiest seas, will inhale in any clime the most polluted atmosphere, will live in the wildest solitude, with beings the most rapacious and bloody. And shall men endure, supported by the honours of a human embassy, trials, dangers, and death, without complaint, which the minister of the Lord Jesus, with the high hopes that attach to his office, cannot endure? If insulted we think of our commission, and feel the inspiration of its honours, and instantly rise superior to shame. He whom heaven has commissioned, needs no human applause to animate him. "He that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." And what if men do comdemn, while God approves? There lies an appeal from every human tribunal. To none of these lower courts are we amenable, in a sense that can excite alarm. Said an apostle, "It is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment." To our own Master we stand or fall. If our message does not please men, we have only to see to it, that it has not been altered in our hands, and, if not, take courage. When we can see affixed to every doctrine we preach the broad seal of heaven, we have no farther concern except, to inquire if we have chosen out acceptable words, and felt a right spirit. If to the book of in-

struction we add or diminish, the deed blots our names from the book of life, and brings upon our heads the plagues recorded. If men will not hear us, we have only to weep in secret places for their pride.

If to men it should seem that we urge them too assiduously, we have only to assure them that they must believe or die. The direction is, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." Our stand is between men and the pit, and our business to stop them. If they now think us too urgent, they will curse our supineness when they have perished. Before we have done with them, they will know the truth of all we have said, and more yet; and will wonder that we could believe it all, and proclaim it so coldly.

If men are angry, still there is hope. This may be the first step to conviction and faith, and they may still be our crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus. The gospel may produce wrath, and still be a savour of life. The tenant of the tombs raved, and then believed. Our assurance is that Christ is able to bind the strong man.

But then we fear the worst, and have no hope that the miserable beings will live, whom we would warn and waken, still we may be to Christ a sweet savour, though it be of death unto death. Christ has not suspended our *reward* on our *success*. He will provide for his ministers who have dared to be faithful, though the whole population of the apostacy should go in a mass to perdition. "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord." For the *faithfulness* of our ministry, not for the *effects;* for the good *we intended to do*, not for the good *we have done*, shall

we be tried in the last day. If the Lord has made us rulers over his house, to give them their meat in due season, blessed are those servants whom their Lord when he cometh shall find so doing. And he will soon return. In a few days we shall have his decision upon our conduct, and till then it is of small importance what is human opinion respecting us.

Thus the godly minister takes courage. If our toil be hard we serve a good master, and the period of rest is nigh. If we should even faint and die under the fatigues of the service, still we can die in no other circumstances so honourably. If our present privations are many, and our joys few, there is just before us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. If the corner of the vineyard where we labour is unpromising, still we know that Christ shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. We have only to fill the place appointed us, as God shall give us ability, and for what remains he will provide. Do we but cast our seed corn upon the moist field, we shall see it after many days. Should the seed lie buried in the dust till we are in heaven, we may still see the fruit of our toil. Thus our commission so presents its consolations in the time of trial, that we may well say with the apostle, "Having this ministry as we have received mercy, we faint not."

IV. *The text prescribes that open and ingenuous conduct, which it is the duty of Christ's ministers on all occasions to exhibit.* Let us notice them,

1. *In their daily walk.* The apostle says of himself and his fellows, probably in allusion to the intrigue and duplicity of the false teachers, "That they renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, and did not walk in craftiness." He does not mean to imply that this had

ever been their course. They had, from the period of their vocation to the apostleship, refused to reach any point of enterprise, by deception and fraud. Even when Paul says of himself, that, on a certain occasion, being crafty, he caught them with guile, he is thought merely to have alluded to the language of his ememies.

The ministers of Christ have nothing to hide, have no budget of secrets, and may say and do nothing that is inconsistent with simplicity and godly sincerity, either in their social and commercial transactions, or in connexion with the functions of their office. The world will doubt, if we show duplicity in one case, whether we are sincere in any case. If we can smile complacently upon the man we would betray and ruin; if with one hand we can embrace, while the dagger is fast held in the other; can *soothe*, and *flatter*, and *hate*: men will have no confidence in us, when we thunder the anathemas of the law, or breathe out the counsels and the accents of mercy. If it cannot be said of the minister of Christ, that he is a sincere and honest man, nothing can be said of him that does not put the whole brotherhood to shame. The man may be able in theology, and in oratory, may be a profound general scholar, may have made the multitude bow to him, but if he be, to adopt a very homely, though a very significant figure, a two-sided man; if his assent and his smile are not tokens of approbation, and we may fear he will betray us, when pledged to serve us, then has he not renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, and will be as readily suspected of insincerity in the pulpit as by the fireside. Heaven's ambassador must exhibit in his countenance, and on the face of his whole deportment, the simplicity of the man of God. The veriest wretch with whom

he has intercourse, ought not to doubt for a moment his honesty.

Toward his ministerial brethren, duplicity is doubly odious. We are but distinct agents, attached to the same grand embassy, and sent to make overtures to the same disloyal multitude. When we have no trust in each other, the foe is strengthened, and our defeat and shame sure, the least approximation to duplicity destroys confidence. We may differ in shades of doctrine and points of duty, and still, if honest men, may co-operate, and there may be in the general embassy an efficiency and a unity, that shall pour honour upon Christ, and shame upon the adversary. We must have confidence in each other's prompt and cordial co-operation, or the world we have come to sanctify, will be strengthened in every deadly and desperate principle of revolt, and will sleep on till they are waked by the terrors of the last trumpet.

The motives to such a confidence are obvious. Our trials and our enemies are numerous, and are the same, and the same our joys and our friends. We serve the same Master, and hope for the same heaven. Without an asylum in each other's bosom, in this outcast world, where we find so rarely an honest friend, we should be the loneliest of all flesh. No union can be more sacred. There is not only Christian sympathy, but the fellowship of office. There belong to the sacred ministry special hopes and promises. In what relationship do the hidden things of dishonesty wear an aspect so monstrous, or wage a war so cruel, as when they disturb the intercourse, and break the compact that binds together the ambassadors of the Lord Jesus. One would sooner lose confidence in his mother's children, and betray his offspring, than see marred the fellowship of the divine legation. That Jesuitical fraud nick-

named *pious*, so long current in the church of Rome, is the worm that now devours that polluted community. May it go, with its foster mother to perdition, and never find a lodgement in the bosom of Christ's ministers. Let us notice the minister of Christ.

2. *In his official capacity.* While the apostles renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, and would not walk in craftiness, *so neither would they handle the word of God deceitfully.* They would not, nor may we, hide, misrepresent, or leave out of view, any truth meant to be conveyed to us in our Book of instructions. The ambassador of Christ resolves, that the Bible, in all its plainness and simplicity, shall be permitted to pour forth its precepts, its doctrines, its denunciations, unadulterated, upon the congregated multitude of the ungodly. To inquire, what is pleasing, and what is popular, and what is safe, belongs only to the traitor, who would make a kiss the signal of arrest.

We may choose out acceptable words, may watch for the best moment when to press an unwelcome truth: this is duty. And in illustrating truth we may put to use all the softness and sweetness of language and figure that is possible, still no truth may be covered up or misstated. We may say to the righteous, it shall be well with them, but we must with equal plainness say to the wicked, it shall be ill with them. "He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." We may dwell upon the glories of heaven, till we, and all about us who believe, shall long to ascend, but we must also raise the covering of the pit, till the ungodly, if they will not repent, shall begin to feel the scorch of its torments. He who would not handle the word of God deceitfully, cannot suffer his unre-

generate hearers to choose what doctrines he shall preach, or what duties he shall urge, or what follies he shall spare, or what the fervency of soul he shall breathe into his message. If he believe a doctrine, he will not hide his faith; if there prevail an error, he dare not conceal his dissent; nor against any vice, however popular, can fail to bear his prompt and unequivocal testimony.

The minister of the gospel, *who conceals his faith*, is a traitor, and goes over soon to the enemy. And while he stays he is a plague and a nuisance. "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle." Why have a plain and pungent and intelligible Bible, and put it into the hands of a crafty ministry, to be neutralized, and tamed, and mangled, before it can reach the conscience? As well may the *Bible* be a *riddle*, or a *dream*, as the *herald* a *knave*. He can fritter down its doctrines till the whole Book is a mere ballad. A people with such a ministry are in a case as pitiable as the wandering Tartar.

V. *The text instructs Christ's ministers how they may best commend themselves to the consciences of men. By manifestation of the truth.* To be useful, we must have an advocate in the conscience of the people. Many may not relish the doctrines we deliver, and may hate our faithfulness, but there may still be, and there must be the conviction, that we are honest men, who act with reference to the judgment. In such a case, one may be useful, even to the men who cordially disrelish the whole testimony of God. They may kindle with rage at the juncture when the truth has found an avenue to the conscience.

And this ascendancy is gained by an undisguised exhibition of the truth. When men see that we dare not go beyond the word of the Lord, and that we dare say all that God has bidden us; that we feel ourselves fast bound by the letter of our commission, then the conscience of our people, if well enlightened, will take part with God, and do homage to our integrity. They may wish that we would alter, somewhat, the message we have received from heaven, may even demand that the point of truth be blunted, may refuse to attend upon a ministry that handles so unceremoniously their passions, their practice, and their prejudices; but if we comply, we lose their respect, and their judgment denounces us contemptible hypocrites. They would rejoice to be successful, but the moral sense would reprobate us. While men writhe under the thrusts of truth, they yield the highest homage to the man whom no bribery can corrupt, who can be contentedly poor and homeless, but cannot be treacherous.

The American ambassador at some foreign court, may give offence, by pressing our claims; but should he violate his commission, and compromise the honour of his country, and the rights of his constituents, he would lose all respect abroad and at home, and sink into deep and lasting contempt. Let it be seen early that no threat can scare us, that no bribe can buy us, that no considerations of ease, honour, or affluence, can for a moment, put our integrity to a stand, or bring us to yield an inch of the territory of truth: thus we give evidence that we have a conscience, and the enemy will be afraid that God will protect us. Men suspect, in this case, that our message is true, and fear that their obstinacy will undo them, and, feel as they may, they yield us respect. Here that divine maxim is verified, "who-

soever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.' The most contemptible of all men, is the man who holds this high commission, but employs his talents to lower down the terms of reconciliation, to the wishes of the unsanctified. He will stand yoked with the wretch who betrays his country, and goes over to be hated and despised in the camp and country of the enemy. But the man who is true to his Lord, who sacredly adheres to his commission, should he not be favoured with any very signal success, may be respected, and happy, and safe.

Finally, the apostle and his brethren felt themselves urged to faithfulness, by the consideration, that God was present. Commending ourselves to every man's conscience, *in the sight of God.* It was the last promise of the Lord Jesus, "Lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world!" The remotest idea of compromising the truth is immediately known to God, and is peculiarly provoking. All sin is committed in his presence. But of all sins, how flagrant and daring is the crime of deliberately altering the message he has given us to deliver to a rebel world! If we are faithful he is present to comfort and support us, but if we shrink, through the fear of man, which bringeth a snare, he is present to despise and reprobate us. Hence, let this be our motto, "Thou God seest me;" and let us live and die under a solemn impression of this truth. Let us have a character, and exhibit a conduct upright in his view. Then the gospel we preach will be to us a savour of life unto life. The all-seeing God will watch us till we die, will guard the slumbers of the sepulchre, and will raise us to enjoy his smiles forever.

How delightful the thought, when slavish fear has not chased away hope, that we minister in the very presence of our Master. If we are in our study he is there, or on our knees he is there, or in the consecrated pulpit, he is there; to know our embarrassments, lay our fears, raise our hopes, and pour consolation into our hearts. From what duty can we shrink, of what foe be afraid, by what sufferings be disheartened, while we serve a God at hand and not a God afar off, and may at any moment roll over our cares upon One who careth for us. He who had not rather be a minister of Christ with all its trials, than wear a crown, knows not the pleasures of the service.

REMARKS.

1. *The subject is very humiliating to Christ's ministers.* We enter the office by mere sufferance. We were under a sentence of condemnation, and any thing short of perdition is mercy, and yet so honoured! Hence no position becomes us but that of the most complete prostration of soul. Our appropriate prayer is, "God be merciful to me a sinner." From no station of usefulnesss, enjoyment, or honour, can we fail to look back to the rock whence we were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence we were digged. None were more unworthy of the office than we, none more richly deserved perdition, or if we reach heaven will celebrate our escape from death in sweeter Alleluias. How free, how sovereign, and how rich the grace that could raise such beings to a station so distinguished!

2. *The subject will help us to judge, who are the true ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ.* They have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, do not walk

in craftiness, nor handle the word of God deceitfully. In the aspect of their whole moral deportment there is seen the open ingenuousness of truth. When they have known the mind of God they dare divulge it; they dare, even if the message be unpleasant. If faithfulness should endanger their interest, offend their benefactors, cut off supplies from their table, and make their children barefoot and houseless, still in their message will be seen the truth, the whole truth, the truth simple, and unadulterated, as it dropped from the lips of Jesus. If they must be lodged in a dungeon, and see kindled the fires that are to consume them, still supported by his presence who said, "I will never leave thee," it is presumed you would see associated with their rags, and their wretchedness and martyrdom, a soul too honest to betray the truth.

But we see, occasionally, the opposite of all this. The man presents himself in the attitude of Christ's minister, but makes it his great object to accommodate his message to the taste of the poor dying creature whom it should be his object to awaken and sanctify. He believes many a doctrine, and reads many a precept that he dare not urge upon his people, and sees approaching dangers against which he dare not warn them. His first concern is to secure to himself the honours and the emoluments of his office, even should it require the compromise of the divine authority, and the divine glory. It grieves us to know that he is likely to perish himself, and his deluded hearers with him. And moreover, he generates a contagion that spreads like the plague through all the churches, and brings the reproach of the whole apostacy upon the men who have a less pliant conscience, and courage enough to do their duty; producing a fastidiousness of taste, that prepares men to

resist the pressure of truth, till they have reached perdition. And it should greatly grieve us to apprehend that our children, when we are dead, may be thrown under such a ministry; may imbibe the contagion, may deny the Lord that bought them, may hate the doctrines that should sanctify them, and under the influence of a smooth and fair and popular religion, glide down gently and smoothly to the place of torment.

3. *In a work so dignified, so responsible, and so perilous, we ought to expect the confidence, the affection and the aid, of those for whose salvation this ministry is established.*

It should secure us their confidence to know that our ministry admits of nothing concealed and mysterious, but is open, undisguised, and ingenuous. We spread before the people our whole commission, make our design known, and open to them our whole hearts. We are willing to earn the confidence we ask, and would say to the world, if on any point we betray your interest, believe any doctrine, or credit any precept that we do not urge, or hide the danger that approaches you, then be distrustful and jealous, believe that we have run before we were sent, and that under the guise of the lamb, there rages the appetite of the wolf. If otherwise, we deserve your assurance. The office that God instituted, that Christ personally honoured, should hold a place very sacred, and very high, in your esteem.

I know there are sections of Christendom where the vilest of men, who do not deserve esteem, serve at the altar. But by their fruits ye shall know them. If they deal in the hidden things of dishonesty, or walk in craftiness, or handle the word of God deceitfully, you are not

obligated to esteem them the ministers of Christ. And still it sometimes happens that a false and deceitful ministry is more popular than the one that Christ approves. It aims to commend itself, *not to the conscience* but *to the unsanctified heart.* It prophecies smooth things, heals the wounds of the awakened conscience slightly, and assures the wicked that it shall be well with them. It covers the pit over, and makes great efforts to lay the cry of alarm. The men whom you may trust, expose your danger, and depict your depravity, lead you to search your hearts, and try your hopes; and they deserve and need your confidence. They have trials enough, when their people rally about them, and confide in their integrity.

Let me say to all the lost, it is equally your duty and your interest to love the ministers of Jesus Christ. They come to you on an errand the most kind, and it may happen, and God may know it, that when they disturb you the most, they feel the most tenderly. When it has seemed to you that they must hate you, they have gone home and wept over you, and interceded with God in agonized prayer for your eternal life. So your child thought you cruel, when you tore the thorn from his wounded hand; but was you not kind?

One thing it is easy to know, he who so presses home upon your conscience the doctrines and duties of the gospel as to offend you, is not probably governed by selfish motives. His interest, *when no reference is had to the last day*, would lead him so to soften his message as not to give offence. You would then the more generously fill his board. Still, when you find him unbendingly faithful, he deserves your esteem the more. Else

you tempt him to betray your interest. When you move him from his integrity, he but goes down with you to the pit; or if God forgive him, and he is saved, he may first have destroyed you and your children. Let him then be faithful, and still have your affection, then his work will be pleasant, and your danger diminished.

And the ministers of Christ will also need your *help*. The enterprise in which they are employed is the redemption of men from eternal misery. And they have all the weaknesses of other men, and need in a work so awfully grand, the prompt co-operation of all who value the soul. The seed they sow must be watered with prayer, their duties must be made easy by your friendship, and their trials be softened by your sympathies. When the burdens of the ministry are thus lightened, they are still weighty enough for the shoulders of an angel. Our constant exclamation is, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Next to him who in the very work itself has continued faithful unto death, the high reward of heaven will be his, who has aided our efforts, and has laboured with us in the gospel. If you could have helped in *building* the world, it would have been a service less honourable than that of helping to redeem it. It was built of *clay*, but must be redeemed with *blood;* it took its form in a *week*, but its redemption has been progressing these *six thousand years*.

You may contribute to save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins; may snatch a spirit that can never die, from perdition, and elevate it to a seat high in bliss: may substitute the glories of heaven for the darkness and horrors of the pit; and change the wailings of the damned into anthems of Alleluia. By mo-

tives mighty like these, you are urged to ease the burdens of the ministry, to render the service pleasant and efficient by your sympathies, your counsels, and your prayers. It is sweet to know that we have sometimes the entire confidence as well as the prayers of those whom it is our work to build up in the faith and purity of the gospel. It cheers the solitude of many a midnight hour, that we are preparing a repast for the disciples of the Lord Jesus, who, when they have fed upon the word, will pray for him who published it. May every such prayer for us be answered, and then returned into your own bosoms, and when the lips are cold and the tongue silent that address you, and the sanctuary where you worship has crumbled, and other generations fill the places we occupy, may we be together about the throne, to sing and say, "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed *be* his glorious name forever: and let the whole earth be filled *with* his glory." Amen and amen.

Finally, it is a crime of no small magnitude to treat with neglect or contempt a ministry formed after the pattern of the text. The embassy that God commissions deserves regard. "He that receiveth you, receiveth me." If ministers are faithful, it is not at the option of their people, whether they shall receive or reject their message, and treat kindly, or otherwise, those who hold the high commission of ambassadors of Jesus Christ. To their own Master they are accountable for every doctrine they advance, every duty they urge, and the proper application of every promise they repeat; and you too are obligated to insert that doctrine, if true into your creed, to practice that duty, and apply legitimately that promise. If they deliver the true gospel. and you reject it, it proves to you a savour of death unto death. Even cold in-

difference is criminal toward that ministry which has immediate connexion with your salvation, and the eternal life of your offspring. God will punish those who treat rudely his ministers. We could point you to the places where sterility and death have reigned for half a century, when the hand had been raised against one whom God sent to them with the news of pardon. The law in Israel, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm," has been renewed in other terms under the gospel. Blessed God, let no child of mine ever hurt or offend thy ministers.

SERMON XXXVII.

THE WEALTHY CHRISTIAN READY TO CONTRIBUTE.

1 *Timothy* vi. 17—19.

Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

The Bible admirably adapts its instructions to every character and condition in human life, from the greatest monarch to the meanest slave. And this fact is an evidence that the Scriptures are from God. They teach with an authority that men uninspired would not have been likely to assume. There is no crouching, no sycophancy, no flattery. Duty is taught to every man in the same style, with the same plainness, and the same assurance. What was said of our Lord, that he taught as one having authority, is true of the whole Bible.

In the text Paul is directing Timothy what he must say to the rich. They may not be high-minded. *God* distinguishes one man from another. "In thine hand it is to make great." They may not trust in their riches, for they are uncertain, and may take to themselves wings and fly away. They must trust alone in God, the living God, who giveth them richly all things *to enjoy*. God suffers them to enjoy their wealth, but he also commands them to *communicate enjoyment*. They are to be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate. They must not even wait to be urged to this duty, but hold themselves in the attitude of hand-

ing out to others what God has put into their possession.

Thus they lay up in store for themselves a good foundation, a treasure upon which they may draw at any future period of want. Hence to be liberal renders them ultimately the more wealthy, and what is more important, enables them to lay hold on eternal life. Thus their duty and their interest are united, and are equally plain. To do good with their wealth is an important means of bringing them to heaven. It is that test of piety which God will demand of the rich. Hence said our Lord, "How hardly do they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." We cannot then be kind to this large and respectable class of men, unless we urge them to liberality, as an indispensable test of their hope. They have some liberty of choice as to the objects they will the most liberally patronize, but may not choose whether they will or will not be ready to communicate; for if they will not, they can have no evidence that they shall lay hold on eternal life.

In proceeding, I shall present an object, which seems to me to stand among the first, and urge its claims upon a single class of the wealthy. Let me say, that *It is the duty of professors of religion who have wealth to consecrate their property to the spread of the gospel.*

Ye disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, your Saviour has set up a church in this world, has promised that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her, and that she shall one day embrace all nations; and calls upon you to consecrate your property to the diffusion of that gospel by which he brings men into covenant with him and makes them happy. Will you hear me, while I offer five arguments to induce you to obey him in this

reasonable requisition. I will enter upon the point without detaining you a moment, and when I have done, you must act as you think proper. I assert, in the

I. Place, *That "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," and hence that he has a right to make this draft upon you.* If I fail in establishing this point, you may lay down the book, and not read another line.

You acknowledge God as the creator of all things. *Here I found his claim;* it is prior to all others. He who built all worlds, and peopled them, and gave that people all their good things, may make a demand upon them to any amount within their power, with the certainty that it cannot be protested. "His are all the beasts of the forest, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." The same is true of your silver, your merchandize, your children, your servants, and all that you have. If not, then name the good thing that you can be sure will be yours to-morrow. Begin, if you please, at the bottom of the catalogue of your comforts, and ascend, through the whole series, to the wife of your bosom, your health, and your life, and tell me which of the whole will be yours to-morrow. Dare you name nothing? Then whosesoever they are, they surely are not yours. For he who has nothing that he can hold a day, has nothing but what is borrowed. And if the good things you possess are not yours, they are the Lord's, or whose are they?

And what was the Lord's at the first, because he made it, *he has carefully watched over and preserved.* Not merely could we have *had* nothing, if God had not *made it*, but we could have *kept* nothing, if God had not *preserved it.* There is no kind of independence

about us; we should have been beggars, if God had not cared for us. There was an eye that watched more narrowly than we did or could, or our wealth had long since taken to itself wings and had flown away. You will own, my Christian friends, that it was the blessed God that watered your fields, and gave success to your commerce, and health to your children, that guarded your house from fire, and your lives from danger. else you would have been pennyless or have perished years since. How many, once as rich as you, are now poor; or as healthy as you, are now in the grave; had a home as you have, but it burned down; had children, as it may be you have, but the cold blast came over them. and they died. And was it not the kindness of God that saved to you what you have? May he not then lay a tax upon your wealth, as large as he pleases?

But I am not through the argument. God has never *alienated* his right. He has suffered Satan to be styled the God of this world, the prince of the power of the air; but *he* owns nothing. The territories that he promised the Lord Jesus, if he would fall down and worship him, were not a foot of them his. And though men are permitted to hold under God certain rights, and which they sometimes term unalienable, still God never has, and never will, renounce his right to dispose at pleasure of all that we term ours. In a moment if he pleases, day or night, he puts us out of our possessions, and the places that knew us know us no more forever. Hence we can serve God only with what is his already, what he has never alienated. "Of thine own we give thee." Now that which God has put into our hands, and the right to which he has never relinquished, we may not, without the charge of embezzlement, appropriate otherwise than as he shall command us.

But I have not done. *God has often asserted his claim to what we term ours.* Once he claimed the whole world, and by a sudden and fearful dispensation, displaced every tenant that had ever occupied its soil, providing afterward for the single family that loved him. And none will say that God went without his own dominions, to lay a world waste that was the property of *another*. When he burned the cities of the plain, he but asserted, though loudly and fearfully, his right, and pressed home to the bosom and the conscience of every foe and friend he had, his claim to be served and honoured, in every valley that he had made fertile, and by every people whom his kindness had rendered prosperous.

In the ruin of all the ancient monarchies, God is seen in the attitude of asserting his claim to the kingdoms of men. as sections of his own empire, to which he will send other rulers, and other subjects, whenever he shall please. The desolating pestilences by which he has depopulated towns and cities, and the thousand nameless sweeps of death written in our gloomy history, had all their commission from heaven, to take back the life, and health, and comforts he had loaned to men. There was one kingdom we read of whose whole population went seventy years into bondage, because their land had not been allowed to keep its Sabbaths, and they had not paid their tithes, and emancipated their servants at the appointed jubilee.

The storms that have wrecked our merchandize, and the fires that have devoured our cities, and all the misnamed casualties that have ruined our fortunes, have been so many claims put in by the rightful owner of all things to what we had appropriated too exclusively to

our own use. And the occurrences of every day are of the same character.

I know that this is not the world of retribution, and that "No man knoweth either good or evil, by any thing that is done under the sun;" but let us not deny that God is known by the judgment that he executeth. Will he not, by repeated demands, keep men in mind that they cultivate his territory, and feed on his bounty, and are happy under his auspices? In thus asserting his claim to be served with the talents that he loans his creatures, he teaches us that one unchangeable law of his kingdom is, that he never alienates what was once his own.

I shall not offend the good man when I claim, that this has been a *disastrous*, because a *disobedient* world. Perhaps the aggregate of property lost by the various calamities that God has sent upon us, would have exactly met the claims he made upon our charity. Had that wealth been expended as he directed, it would have made the world wise and happy. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." "There is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty."

It is impossible to say how much more prosperous this world might have been, if men had expended their wealth as God would have them; how much more frequently the showers had fallen, or more genial had been our sun, or more gentle our breezes, or mild our winters, or fertile our soil, or healthful our population, if we had been a

better people, and had served the Lord with our substance. His promise must have failed, or he would have filled our barns with plenty, and caused our presses to burst out with new wine.

As the churches shall wake to their duty, and give the world the gospel, I hope, and if infidelity scoffs, still I will hope, that much of the curse will be removed from this ill-fated territory, and God kindly stay his *rough* wind, in the day of his *east* wind. How many of its plagues will be cured, its wars prevented, its heaths made fertile, and its earthquakes stilled; and what the amount of blessings bestowed upon this poor world, when it shall become more loyal and more benevolent, none but God can know.

I cannot believe, that when we shall do as he bids us, he will so often rebuke us. When we cease to waste his goods, he will allow us to continue longer in the stewardship; when we shall be faithful in the few things, he will make us rulers over many things. If you will now consider me as having established the divine claim, to you, and all that you have, I will proceed to say,

II. *Christians who have the means, should contribute to disseminate the gospel, because they are heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.* They belong to that kingdom which the gospel was intended to establish. This fact is quite enough to give the cause I plead a strong hold upon every pious heart. Ye disciples of the Lord Jesus, read for once the charter of your hopes, and while it warms your heart, tell me if you have done half your duty. "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present or things to come; all are yours,

and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Thus it seems God and his people have but one interest. Hence when he commands them to spread his gospel. he but bids them buy themselves blessings, bids them foster their own interest, and make their own kingdom happy. The Christian has by his own act identified his whole interest with that of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. If God is honoured, he is happy, and God is honoured in the salvation of sinners, and in the joy of his people. Hence God can command his people to do nothing but that which will bless themselves.

Now when did you know a king's son who would not joyfully expend his father's treasures to enlarge, and strengthen, and beautify the kingdom to which he was heir? He thus polishes his own crown, and blesses his own future reign. What believer has not the same interest that God has in lengthening the cords and strengthening the stakes of Zion? He is one of the little flock, to whom it is his Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom. He is to be a king and a priest to God and the Lamb forever. And has he still an interest distinct from his heavenly Father? And if not, he will hold all he has at the control of God, and will need only to know his duty, and will act most cheerfully. A

III. *Reason why Christians who have the means, should contribute to disseminate the gospel is, that they must be merciful, as their Father in heaven is merciful.* Over that mass of misery which the apostacy has produced their pious hearts have long bled in sympathy. And their charity is not of that kind that it can content itself with saying, "Be ye warmed, and be ye filled." They have read, and have strongly felt that

cutting interrogation of the apostle, "Whosoever hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" And there is no man so poor as he who has not the bread of life. The good man would render all men happy. His charity is warm like that which beat in the heart of the Son of God, and to do his duty is his meat and his drink. This makes him like his Master, and to this he aspires. He cannot hope to rejoice eternally in the achievements of redemption, unless moved by the same pity for the miserable that he felt, he is prepared to march up promptly and offer the Saviour any service he requires.

I appeal then, ye disciples of Jesus Christ, to the kindness of your heart, when I ask you to contribute to render the world happy by your wealth. Would you not cure some of the plagues that sin has generated, and that have so long preyed upon the happiness of man? Would you not quench the funeral pile, and save the young, and beautiful, but infatuated widow, that she may nurse her imploring infant, and live to rear it up to life? Would you not free one half the human family, the female sex, from that servitude to which paganism has subjected them? Would you not snatch ten thousand infants from the altars of devils, where they now lie, bound and weeping, waiting till you speak a word of mercy for them? Would you not teach the vast herd of idolaters, that there is a kinder, and more merciful God, than those they worship? Would you not break in upon the delusions of the false prophet, and tell his misguided followers that you have read of a holier heaven than they hope for? Would you not file off the chains that have been fastened so many centuries upon poor afflicted

Africa? Would you not stay the progress of war, and save from death the thousands that are marching, wan and weary, toward the field of death? O, would you not, were it possible, bring back this base world to its home and its Maker? Have you then a purse, into which God may not require you to thrust your hand, and take thence what he has there deposited, with a view to make this same world happy?

IV. *Bear with me, ye followers of the Lamb, and I will say again that you have covenanted to be workers together with God, in achieving the purposes of redemption, and must now employ your energies to widen the boundaries of his holy empire, or forfeit your vow.* It was in you a voluntary compact, and you pledged in that hour your prayers, your influence, your farm, your merchandize, your purse, your children, and all that you have. And heaven has recorded that vow, to be brought up against you, if it be violated, in the day of retribution. It was wholly at your option, whether you would enter into that sweeping covenant, whether you would swear; but you have entered, you have sworn, and cannot go back. You then relinquished forever your personal rights, and have had ever since but a community of interest with God and his people. Now God is employed in doing good, and his people too, if they are like him. How then will it correspond with your oath to stand aloof from the calls of the church, and disregard the command of God, and let the waste places lie desolate, and let the heathen die in their pollutions, and let the captives perish in their chains, and let almost the whole of that territory, purchased with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, lie still under the usurped dominion of the prince of hell; and let a

whole condemned world go on to the judgment with all this blood upon it unsanctified? Oh, how will your broken vows rise and haunt you, in that day when the wealth you have saved shall be weighed in the balance with the souls it might have redeemed.

Once more, and I have done. *As you hope you have been sanctified through the truth, you have some experience of the value of that gospel which we urge you to promulgate.* Once you were ignorant of God, and were unhappy. You were in somewhat the same forlorn condition with those whose cause I plead; you had forsaken God, the fountain of living waters, and had hewn out to yourselves broken cisterns, that could hold no water. And you remember that dark period. Your mind travelled from object to object, through all the round of created good, in search of enjoyment, and "found no end in wandering mazes lost."

And there is a world of intelligent immortal beings seen panting and weary in the same fruitless chase. It was the blessed gospel that arrested you, and saved you. Your heedless steps it guided, your dark mind it enlightened, your erring conscience it rectified, your insensibility it aroused, your hard heart it softened, your selfishness it subdued, your pride it humbled, your wayward course it changed, your covenant with death, and your agreement with hell it disannulled. And here you stand, redeemed, regenerated; your whole character changed, and your final destiny altered, through the influence of the blessed gospel. The curse is removed, you are a child of God, and an heir of glory, and shall one day see the King in his beauty; *and the gospel has done it.* It has given you peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, a firm hope of heaven, and the soul

reviving assurance, that all things shall work together for your good, till you rise to be where Christ is, behold his beauty, and rejoice in his love forever.

Now the question is, whether you will contribute of your wealth to save those who are perishing as you so lately were. I now plead with you by all that religion has been worth to you, by all the joys it has brought you, by all the woes it has cured, by all the hopes it has raised, and by all the transformation it has wrought in your character and your condition. For what price would you return into the darkened, and dreary, and hopeless condition in which the gospel found you? For what would you barter away all the delightful prospects that open before you? and calculate on no more precious sacramental seasons, no more communion of saints, no more delightful hours in your closet, nor Pisgah-views of the fields of promise, nor fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ? At no price would you part with these! Then know how great are the blessings which you have it in your power to confer on those who are perishing for lack of vision.

Do you say, they can purchase the privileges of the gospel as you have? No, they will not. They know not their value, and will die in their sins, ere they will give a shilling for the light of the gospel. Not the whole of India, if it would save them all from hell, would support a single missionary.

Will God send them the gospel by miracle? No, he once did thus send it to the lost, blessed be his name! but he now commands *us to send it* to those who are perishing for lack of vision. We know our duty, and God will require it of us. Can we meet the heathen in the judgment, if we have done nothing to redeem them?

I will plead no longer, but let me tell you in parting,

that when you shall see the world on fire, your wealth all melting down, and those who have perished through your neglect, calling upon the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, and shall know that you might have saved them, there will be strong sensations. If you are saved yourselves, and this is doubtful if you are not anxious to save others, you will wish a place to weep over your past neglects, before you begin your everlasting song; and if lost yourselves, then indeed there will be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth forever. May Jehovah bless you, and dispose you to do your duty now, that you may hereafter lay hold on eternal life.

SERMON XXXVIII.

THE ONLY INTEREST IN SAFE KEEPING.

Deuteronomy xxxii. 9.

The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.

When God exhibits himself, as the portion of his people, we feel no surprise. He can be to them all they need, can gratify all their wants, and all their hopes. But what can his people be or do for him? How can they so rise in his estimation, that he shall style them his portion, and his inheritance? The God who has built a thousand worlds, who thunders in the heavens, and holds the stars in his right hand; can he value his people above them all! And yet this precious truth is prominent in the text, and is demonstrated, by the whole course of providential events, since the creation of the world. If that is the drearest to God *which cost him most*, as is often the fact in our history, then indeed there is an obvious reason for the truth of the text. Worlds took being at his word, and will perish at his bidding, but he redeemed his people with the life of his Son; hence his high regard for them. And hence a reason for all he intends to do for them in futurity. He will guide them with his counsel, and afterward receive them to glory.

Hence to God's people the text contains a very precious truth. God has selected from the works of his hands, as what shall stand the highest in his estimation, his redeemed people. Not that he has alienated his right to any thing. Every world that he has built is his, and

his foes are his. But in his church he will take peculiar pleasure. He will employ all his energies, to make his people happy, and himself happy in them. This was his purpose when he built the creation, and when fully accomplished, "The heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

But there is a truth *implied* in this text of solemn and dreadful import. It makes worthless every thing in this world, but the church of God. And what is worthless is not safe. Hence I purpose to illustrate this doctrine, *There is nothing safe but the church.* My intention is to look at facts *ancient* and *modern*, together with *what God assures us shall transpire in future;* all going to show, that while God has always cared for his church, he never did place intrinsic value upon any thing else.

I. *I notice ancient facts.* When the world was built, it is believed to have exhibited to the eye of its Maker unmingled beauty; and would seem to us to have had intrinsic value. But it was only holiness that God valued. Sin entered,

> "Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat,
> Sighing through all her works, gave signs of wo
> That all was lost."

There were then generated the thorn and the thistle, and the curse of God lighted upon every part of this creation. A holy God could set no value upon a world bereft of moral rectitude. It would not have been surprising, had he destroyed it, and built another, to be filled with beings who would obey his law, and be worthy of his kind regards. But his wisdom devised a remedy, and he set up in that apostate family a church,

whose interest has ever since then given to every thing else its price. When the church increased, the world was valuable, and when it diminished. the world became in the estimation of God comparatively a pile of stubble.

Cast one look at the antedeluvian history. The church had dwindled to a point, and became at length embosomed in a single family. To save that family no pains were spared; but all else, men and things, except what was needed to feed the floating church, and enable his people to cultivate and stock the new world, perished. Wealth and magnificence had now lost their value. If God had pleased, he could have avenged himself of his adversaries, and still have spared that vast amount of wealth, which perished in their overthrow. But why do it? The treasures of the old world had ceased to be valuable, when the church was gone. Their innumerable cities walled up to heaven, and filled with precious things, were all swept away. How wonderful, to see Jehovah restrain the deluge one hundred and twenty years, after his purpose to destroy had gone out, till the ark was prepared, his long-suffering evinced, and a happy family housed from the impending desolation! This done, he collected into that house of safety all that was valuable, his little church and what they needed to sustain them during the solitary year, their food and raiment, and the materials for reanimating the new world. He could then smile at the tempest, and stimulate the storm. O how great is God out of his holy place! How sadly unsafe are that people, and those treasures that have no connexion with his kingdom!

There was offered another argument in support of the same truth on the plains of Sodom. A branch of the true church had been located in that dissolute valley, and was at length in danger of being swallowed up in the

gulf of depravity. The population was too wealthy to be wise, had too much of the meat that perisheth, to regard that meat that endureth to everlasting life. The Watchman of Israel, as he surveyed the devoted plain, saw his whole church in a single house, and what was his he saved, but swept away the residue. The abandoned population, their palaces their gold, their merchandize, their flocks and harvest, their gaudy apparel, and all their guilty instruments of idolatry and lust, were in God's account of no value, were no part of his inheritance. The moment Lot was gone, the guard that kept the plain was called in.

It will not be denied that God could have avenged upon that guilty community his broken law, and still have spared their riches, but these had no value when his churches had retired. If Lot or Abraham could have been more holy or more happy, God would have spared them the treasures he consumed. But he chose here to display his vindictive justice, and create them other and better comforts. All that in his estimation was valuable, he saved.

So in the land of Egypt, God collected his people into Goshen, and there spread a canopy over them, while he poured out his plagues upon their oppressors. Out of that little territory, there was nothing in all that idolatrous land, on which he seems to have placed the smallest value. Its population, having filled up the cup of their iniquity, and their monuments of grandeur, and skill, and oppression, were the merest vanity. The life or liberty of one believing child of Abraham out-priced them all. Hence over his precious fold he placed one hand, while the other he wrote *Tekel* upon the walls of Egypt, and spread desolation and death through its fields and its streets. The plagues I know raged under the

divine control: but they might destroy any where except in Goshen.

So at the Red-sea the surest laws of nature were suspended, for the deliverance of Israel; while the pursuing enemy seems to have been as worthless, in the esteem of Israel's God, as their beasts and their chariots. When the church had reached the Arabian shore, and the rear-rank was out of danger, God suffered the raging waters to find their level. He had saved his people, and there was nothing else to save. The Egyptian army were God's enemies, and their overthrow an act of retributive justice, and while the tender heart bleeds over the grave of that ill-fated multitude; we are not forbidden in the midst of our tears, to reason on the palpable insecurity thus shown us of all but the church of God. He would open a path through the deep for his people, but would not employ his power to hold back the sea a moment longer than the safety of his church required.

So the Amorites and Moabites melted away in their contest with Israel. And the Canaanites, when the family of Abraham needed their lands, were the merest stubble, and the breath of the Lord consumed them. They cried to their gods, but they perished in the midst of their devotions: their idols could not save them. There even went out in behalf of Israel this edict, "The kingdom and nation that will not serve thee shall perish." Thus the world was taxed for the benefit of the church. Nations held their existence on the sole condition, that they should be found useful to Israel, and perished when God ceased to have need of them. "I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee."

Now as we travel down the tract of ages, we shall

find constant illustrations of the fact, that God values nothing else but his church. This one interest, as far as God has been seen to operate in this world, appears to have engrossed his whole care. The church is that monument which has stood and told his glory to every new-born generation. Other kingdoms, rapid in their rise, and dominant in their power, have gone rapidly into oblivion, and heaven has kept no very careful record of their obsequies. The Assyrian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and Roman empires, with all their multitudes, their wealth, their science, and their military prowess, have perished in the wreck of time; while through all these periods not a promise of God to his people has failed, nor a pious hope been unaccomplished. The little stone, cut out of the mountain, without hands, has become a great mountain, while the rock, from which it was hewn, is seen to crumble and perish. Empires dazzling in the eye of man, but inimical to the church of Christ, were worthless in the esteem of God. Their proud stautes, their triumphal arches; their mausoleums, their heroes and their gods, he swept away with the besom of destruction. Baal, Dagon, Moloch, and Jupiter have perished, with their hosts of worshippers, while not a saint has wept unnoticed, nor a prayer remained unanswered.

Not for one moment has God forgotten his covenant, while he has thus swept away from time, and life, whatever that covenant did not include. In that darkest hour of Israel's history, the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal, God loved and comforted with his presence; felt all their oppressions, reproved kings for their sake, put their tears into his bottle, and minuted all their wrongs, that he might apportion to each, in the coming life, his appropriate weight of glory. And the

archives of heaven can never be lost. The history of every suffering believer is written as with the point of a diamond on a rock, and will remain legible in the day of retribution.

But I must return from this digression. I am giving you the sad history of what was *not* the church. There came a period when Jerusalem changed its relationship to God. The church's light went out, and the religion of the sanctuary was reduced to unmeaning and polluted ceremonies. The house of prayer for all nations, became a den of thieves. From that moment the interest which God had taken in the holy city and sanctuary was alienated. No longer would God be known in palaces of Zion for a refuge. The people of Jerusalem had become as worthless as those of Moab or Edom. Then the moment was, that God could without regret see their city demolished, and the last stone of their proud temple thrown down. He loved his people, and loved Jerusalem, and the temple, while they were holy: but when the priesthood became corrupted, and the temple profaned, and the divine glory forsook the mercy-seat, he then abandoned the consecrated spot, as being no longer a section of his inheritance, and suffered the hedges of his vineyard to be broken down. And he now cares no more for the holy land, than for other lands. If the time shall come again that his covenant people shall be there, walking in his statues, he will build again the walls he has thrown down, and render Jerusalem a theatre of his glory. Up to that hour, Syria and Egypt, shall be as sacred as Canaan; and the stones and dust of his temple be as uninteresting and unholy, as the ruins of demolished Babylon; a place of dragons and of owls.

II. I come now to look at *modern facts*, expecting to find here the same testimony, as in past events, to the truth of the doctrine, that nothing but the church is safe. In the convulsions of our times, we have seen everything placed at hazard, but the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every revolution demonstrates that God has no other interest in our world. In the past half century how low a price has he set upon crowns and kingdoms. And the lives of armies, composed generally of ungodly men, how unworthy have they seemed of his care. The fowls of heaven fatten upon their bodies, and the soil is enriched with their blood. The thousands that fell at Waterloo, if impenitent, were in the estimate of heaven as worthless as the clods that covered them. But if there died in that murdered multitude a pious soldier, angels will watch his ashes till he rise, and God be more interested in the turf that covers him, than in the splendid monument that stands upon the tomb of the hero. An empire of his enemies is in God's esteem of more trifling amount than one obscure believer. The hosts that have died in the fields of modern battle, perished because the church had no farther use for them. Else that promise would not be true, "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or *the world*." And well may we ask with the poet,

> "What are the earth's wide kingdoms else,
> But mighty hills of prey?"

In all this a believer will find no mystery. The Bible and the Spirit of God have taught him, that nothing has intrinsic worth but holiness, and that God can place no value upon what is worthless. Hence he lets loose his winds, which go teeming forth with desolation. Navies are wrecked upon the reefs, and cities torn from their base.

Earthquakes spread the cry of death, and open a thousand graves at a shock. Kingdoms are shaken, and whole islands, with their wealth, and pride, and enterprize, sink into the opening gulf. The wealth of ages perishes in the twinkling of an eye, and with it talents, eloquence, wisdom, science, the curiosities of antiquity, and the close kept records of a hundred generations. All this time the promise holds to God's people, "No evil shall come nigh thee." Things are rich and splendid in the view of men, which weigh nothing in the account of God. If one saint must share in the general calamity, him the Lord watches with his eye, supports him in death, and lightens the glooms of his sepulchre. But men who have filled up their cup, and the wealth that brought their perdition, all these God values at nothing.

The fact is, and no fact is more interesting, the world was built for the use of the church. Holiness only, and that which promotes holiness, are valuable. The walls and hedges of a vineyard, are useful while there are vines to protect, and may be burned or demolished when the vines are withered. Kingdoms have been built and perished, and armies been congregated and slaughtered, to serve the interests of the church. Hence, said the apostle, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Hence to Zion's interest bends every other, is decreed every revolution, contributes every storm, rolls every ocean, and flows every tide. Earth is barren or fruitful as her interests require. As on the whole kingdom of Israel it might not rain for two and forty months, when God's people needed the protection of a judgment so long protracted, so may we presume that at the call of

Zion's interests, God now withholds, or imparts blessings.

The amount of the whole is, that nothing has value, that does not contribute to advance the one interest which God has made paramount in this world. Royal blood, when the king is not his servant, is base and degenerate. The blood of David he watched with care, knew every artery in which it flowed, for he had promised to his seed the throne of Israel: but the blood of Saul became petrified in its channels. The blood of saints and martyrs is royal, the blood of prophets and apostles; for these he hath promised, shall sit on thrones, and wear crowns of glory that shall never fade. Thus are the passing ages gleaned of every relic that belongs to the saints, and when the gleanings are finished, the stubble is promptly consumed. The world is still under tribute to Zion, as in the ages that have gone by, and we must leave it with God to say, whether he will relax the rigour of his requisitions, till all the nations have perished, and the redeemed are all brought home to heaven. I am to look,

III. *At the events which God has assured us shall transpire hereafter.* If by the light of promise and of prophecy we look into futurity, God is still seen in the attitude of fostering his church, and overlooking every other interest. The kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord. Holiness to the Lord is to be written upon the bells of the horses, as if to teach us that nothing shall exist, but that which is consecrated to God. The highest offices of state are to become subservient to the interests of Zion. Kings are to be nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers to

the church. It is evident, on almost every page of the prophecies, that Zion's interests are one day to absorb all other interests.

The world seems already to be shaping itself to become one holy empire under the Prince of peace. I would be neither an infidel nor an enthusiast; but would fear all that God has threatened, and expect all that he has promised. I read, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth;" this promise I calculate will be verified. I read again, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God;" this threatening I would fear. The wealth which men would not expend in blessing Zion will perish in the using. Pearls worth each a kingdom, God intends shall be melted down in the last conflagration. When the church shall need their aid no longer, sun, moon, and stars will lose their fires and their light. The heavens and the earth which are now, as we are assured by the word of God, are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men. Thus I see the grand system consummated.

But through all these scenes, and even this last, God will be kind to his people. He will not usher in that period, till the last believer is sanctified. The orb of day will continue in full blaze, till the last pilgrim is lighted home. When Christ has opened the portals of everlasting life upon the rearmost of the ransomed multitude, then the lights of heaven will go out. Christ will wake his people, and bid them escape to heaven, before the last fires are kindled. Thus *to the last* the church is safe, and nothing else. This one interest God ever made his care, and it will continue to be his care forever.

REMARKS.

1. If it should be objected to this reasoning, that there have been periods when the church seemed *unsafe*, while its foes were *safe;* it may be replied, that the church still lives, and, therefore, up to this time *has been safe*, while every other interest has been placed at hazard. All the ancient foes of Zion, who for a time seemed to prosper, have gone to their own place. Scarcely a trace of those kingdoms, which employed their power to destroy the church of God, can now be found. And her individual foes, unless converted into friends, have all perished, or we see them on their way to perdition. On this point we have the direct testimony of God.

Moreover we have never seen Jehovah make bare his arm for the *destruction* of his church, as of her foes. He has often rebuked his people when they sinned, but they repented, and he forgave them. "In a little wrath he hid his face from them for a moment; but with everlasting kindness he had mercy on them." Not so with their enemies. God has swept them away as with the besom of destruction. The storms of wrath came down upon them, and they did not repent till God had utterly *destroyed* them. It was not with them a temporary rebuke and then mercy, but an utter consumption. Thus the two cases infinitely differ.

2. If it be objected that the subject exhibits God as indifferent to the welfare of some part of the human family; we reply, he will do none of his creatures wrong The objection arises from viewing sin as a *calmi ty* rather than a *crime*. If wicked men deserve only wrath, God, in destroying them, does right.

Moreover God offers all men his love, and a sure sanctuary with his people. If they will not have him to reign over them, then God will appear gracious, while he provides for those who trust in him, and just and holy while he leaves all others to eat the fruit of their doings, and be filled with their own devices.

3. Let me suggest that, "all are not Israel who are *of* Israel." While we have thus celebrated the safety of the church, and have seen all else in danger, let it be remembered that it is the church *invisible*. If a false profession would secure us, the way to heaven would be *the broadway*. But when any section of the visible church became corrupt, it perished. A false professor is of no more value in the esteem of God, than an infidel. Judas and Julian had a seat among the disciples, but their ruin was none the less prompt and consummate. It is holiness that God values. When the Lord Jesus shall come the second time without sin unto salvation, if he find any of his people without the fold, he will save them; and if he finds his foes within, he will recognize them, and send them away into utter darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

4. The subject we contemplate shows us that God is interested in every large or small community, more or less, as it contains a greater or less amount of holiness. Show me a kingdom where there are none of his elect, and with the word of God in my hand I can predict its destiny. It will prolong its existence only while in some way it serves the church, and will then become extinct. But let a nation embosom a large body of believers, or let its energies be expended to serve the church, and it has the surest possible defence.

Hence all that confidence, which in times of political distress, we place in *men* and *measures* is a delusive

trust. It is the presence of moral rectitude, and the prayer of faith, that render God a nation's guardian. Yes, lovers of your country, fill our land with temples, and Bibles, and truth; let it stand pre-eminent in the work of spreading the gospel; let our officers be peace, and our exactors righteousness; and we are more ably defended, than we could be, by all the armies that were ever congregated, and all the navies that ever rode upon the sea. Nations may boast of their strength, and array their forces, but if they do not please God, and he despise their host, they fall an easy prey.

So in a *city* or a *town* where there is no holiness God has no interest. He will not care for our improvements in trade or industry, or take pleasure in our accumulated fortunes. By how much we subserve the interests of his kingdom, so will be the kindness he will feel for us, and the care he will take of us. Unless held in requisition for God, all we have is dross; "Our gold and silver are corrupted, and our garments are moth-eaten."

So in *churches* and *congregations* God has an interest, and exerts an ageney in their behalf, exactly in proportion to the amount of holiness found there. Let a church be very corrupt, and God will care but little for it; let all its members, be holy, and it stands high in the estimation of heaven. Not in exact accordance to their numbers, are the churches arranged on the records of heaven. In many a case shall the last be first, and the first last. And it is not presumption to say, that God will apportion the visits of his mercy, to the aggregate of holiness that shall operate to invite down his gracious and life-giving influences. How forlorn, then, is the hope that God will grant seasons of refreshing, where there are none to pray; and will give a new heart

and a right spirit, where there is no house of Israel to inquire of him.

Still when men are the most deserted as to spiritual blessings, God may allow them temporal prosperity. It is all the heaven he will give them. Men may prosper *most* when they are nearest destruction. The old world and the devoted cities were never more prosperous than when their last sun was rising. Men may be ripe for the scythe of death, their cup of iniquity full, while yet their fields wave with the abundant harvests, the atmosphere is fragrant with the odours of the ripened fruits and flowers, and echoes with the song of the cheerful labourer. Men often perish *the sooner* because they prosper. Riches increase and they set their hearts upon them. Any people who become *rich*, faster than they become *holy*, have this very destiny to fear.

Inquire, then, brethren in *Christ*, what is the extent of God's inheritance among you? This a question which I feel willing to press upon your consciences with the weight of a world. Answer it and you have determined the the extent of God's regard for you, and his care of you. The number of real believers, and the progress they make in holiness, are the facts that are to measure your consequence under the government of God. I know this thought exhibits wealth, and birth, and talents, as comparatively of little worth, and is *humiliating* as it is *true*. God is not attached to places and names as we are, but to holiness. The territory where the seven churches were, and even where the Shechinah blazed, God has forsaken: and he will treat you as he has others. He will never forsake you while you serve him, nor your children if they are holy, nor your seed, to a thousand generations, unless they forsake

God. They that despise him shall be lightly esteemed; but let us draw near to him and he will draw near to us.

This subject is calculated to comfort pious *families*. If we aim to render our children holy, God will build us up a sure house forever. The poor family, who walk in the fear of God, he will consider more worthy of his patronage than a whole community of the profane and the proud. He will not command that house to become extinct where he is feared and worshipped. The angels will pitch their tent there, and,

> "What ills their heavenly care prevents,
> No earthly tongue can tell."

If God be for us who can be against us? if he resolve to prosper and bless us, we and ours shall be safe, amid every storm that blows. No plague shall come nigh thee.

The *individual* believer may take all the comfort possible from this subject. No matter what his station. God regards the pious slave more than the impious master. The poor widow that can pray, and is happy in her closet, can do more to save her land, than the prayerless monarch. She can sit down calmly, and look at the gathering tempest, and ask her Father to manage and control its violence. We shall ever find that thought, so beatifully expressed by the poet, true,

> "The soul that 's filled with virtue's light,
> Shines brightest in afflictions' night:
> And sees in darkness beams of hope.
> Ill-tidings never can surprise
> His heart, which fixed on God relies,
> Though waves and tempests roar around;
> Safe on a rock he sits, and sees
> The shipwreck of his enemies,
> And all their hope and glory drowned."

But finally the *ungodly* are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Shocking indeed beyond all description is the condition of that man whom God does not love, and for whose happiness he will make no provision. He may, if God's plan permit, enjoy long the bounties of a gracious Providence, but if God suffer him to live, and makes him an instrument of his glory, it will all be no evidence that he loves him. And a day must soon come, when he will know his own character, and feel all the guilt, and shame, and misery of his condition. To be safe or happy, we must become a part of God's inheritance, and have a character that shall interest us in his love. The sinner, then, who will change his character, may wipe away his tears; but if he will continue impenitent and unbelieving, he is exhorted to be afflicted, and mourn, and weep.

SERMON XXXIX.

THE ENLIGHTENED CONSCIENCE UNBENDING.

1. *Corinthians*, viii. 13.

If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth.

In the early establishment of Christianity, it became necessary to discriminate between those customs, both Jewish and heathen, that might or that might not be tolerated in the church of Christ. In things that were *in themselves* perfectly harmless, and harmless in *their bearing*, there was no need that believers dissent from the world. In these things it was their duty to become all things to all men. For instance, Paul took Timothy and circumcised him, because it was known of all that his father was a Grecian. Circumcision had ceased to be an ordinance in the church of God, but no law had been issued forbidding the amputation of the foreskin. Hence this might innocently be done, when it would render a Christian minister more useful; though not as an ordinance of God, obligatory upon believers under the new dispensation.

There prevailed the heathen custom of offering the flesh of the beasts they slew for the market to their idol gods, and if men made a feast the beasts were slain in honour of their idols, and then set before their guests. To these feasts Christians would be invited and might go innocently; provided, however, that the meat on which they were to feast had not been offered to idols, or, if so offered, the fact had not been made known to them.

Whatsoever had been sold in the shambles, or market, they might eat, asking no questions, whether it had or had not been offered to idols. But if any should inform them that the meat set before them had been sacrificed to heathen deities, they might not eat. And that, not because the meat had been by this ceremony polluted, or injured; for an idol was nothing at all. This the best informed believers would early know; hence in itself considered there would be no harm in their eating it. But there were some weak believers who would not have thrown off the impression that the heathen gods, whom they had before worshipped, were a kind of inferior deities, that had a real existence, and who could not eat flesh that had been consecrated to them, without practising idolatry. Now if better informed believers, who, as to any effect upon themselves, might harmlessly feast upon these sacrifices, should do so, they would lead their weaker brethren into sin, and tempt them to apostacy. Hence they must abstain, because of the weak and unenlightened consciences of their brethren. They need not seek to be informed whether they were about to feast on a heathen sacrifice or not, for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, and they might partake of the bounties of God without scruple. They need ask no question for 'conscience' sake, conscience not their own, however, but their brother's. They might eat and not sin, but their weak brother might be induced by their example to eat, and sin in eating.

Thus you have the whole case. But some of the more matured believers might say, "Why should I be judged by another man's conscience? As I know that an idol is nothing at all, and that meat offered to idols is not polluted, I will eat and let my weak brother take

care of himself." Here there was occasion for the exercise of one of the most delicate principles of piety, and Paul declared that, for himself, he would eat no flesh while the world stood, if his so eating caused his brother to offend. I shall endeavour to *illustrate the conduct of the apostle on this occasion*, and *vindicate* and *apply* the *principle*.

He would abandon an alienable right in regard to the good of another; would care deeply for the souls that had been won to the Lord Jesus by the gospel. He considered his own conduct as contributing largely to make up the aggregate of public Christian sentiment, which would govern the infant church. Though he could ably defend his conduct in eating the heathen sacrifices, yet many might imitate him in eating, who would never come under the influence of his reasoning, and so would be injured by his practice. It may be well to remark,

I. *His conduct* did *not* imply that one may make *another* man's conscience his own guide in duty. We are to know for ourselves what duty is, and when we know are under obligation to do it. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant, to his own master he standeth or falleth. There is no medium through which one man's conscience can approach and influence another, except through the medium of his conduct. If a man have any conscience, he must evince it by his deeds, and thus give it all the foreign influence it can ever have. Himself it can ever have. Himself it can influence directly. Every man's conscience was made solely for his own use, except as it shall give rise to a conversation and deportment that may have an influence upon others. This maxim inverted was the grand

error, and continues to be, in the catholic church. The judgment of the Pope, and his emissaries, is considered paramount to the decisions of the most enlightened conscience. What the head of the church has decided is truth—however incredible, must be believed; and what he has decreed is duty—must be done, though at war with Scripture and common sense. Hence there need be light in no other mind but his, and hence the Scriptures are withheld from the laity. It is of no consequence that they have a conscience, if they are not to be guided by it, but must obey the dictates of some other conscience.

Paul had no idea of abetting a principle like this. He would be guided exclusively by his own conscience, in the very practise he proposed to adopt. His judgment decided, and his heart approved the decision, that it would be his duty to live on lighter food than that which he might lawfully eat, if thereby he would bless a weak brother. That brother had no right to demand of him this sacrifice, and urge the apostle to a course of conduct not reqired by his own conscience. His obligation was to know for himself that the idol was nothing, and thus eat innocently, as Paul could of the consecrated meat. Still Paul must regard his brother's good, and not make his liberty a stumbling-block to the weak. Here his own conscience bound him to a practice which his own conscience did not require of him, but for the ignorance and weakness of his brother. I think this principle is too obvious to be mistaken, while yet the apostle by no means renounces the right to be governed solely by his own conscience.

II. We are *not* to gather from the conduct of the apostle in this matter that *one* man's conscience may

abridge *another* man's liberty. One man's necessities may induce another to give up his rights, and benevolence, such as the Lord Jesus exhibited when he laid aside the glory that he had with the Father before the world was, may induce him to do it cheerfully; but man may not require it of him, by any other law than that of love. If we are confident that another is misinformed, our duty is, if possible, to enlighten him, but we cannot require of him that he disregard the decisions of his own judgment, and permit himself to be guided by our opinion in opposition to his own in a question of morals. If Paul had been the only man in the infant church who had light enough to partake harmlessly of a heathen sacrifice, the opinion of others that he sinned in this matter would not have rendered him guilty. That weak brother, who could not do what Paul could harmlessly, might not require of the apostle that he confess himself guilty in acting according to the superior light of his own mind. You may blame me in a case in which I differ from you in my decision, for not reading and informing myself, for not being open to conviction, for not being candid and ingenuous and inquisitive; but if, finally, I cannot see as you do, and cannot think it right to co-operate with you, however you may lament my error, you cannot require me to act differently till I change my views. Thus Paul did not give up his right to decide that meat sacrificed to a heathen god might not be eaten by a Christian, harmlessly, but he relinquished the privilege of eating it because he should thus harm his brother; he retained the right but resigned the privilege. He was very tenacious of not having it understood that he was restricted by his own conscience. "What say I, then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? No." As if he

had said, My conduct is not to suffer this construction. "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils." "All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient." Thus did his enlightened mind discriminate, and his benevolent heart correspond.

III. The apostle's conduct in this matter *does not* go to palliate ignorance. It is every man's first duty to know what duty is, to have his conscience informed, and be prepared to act correctly in all the varied scenes that may suddenly transpire before him. He does not refuse to eat the meat consecrated to devils, because he lacked that knowledge that prepared him innocently to partake; else his ignorance had been sin. He abstains because, though all things may be lawful, yet all things edify not.

His brethren, who in their ignorance, to gratify their appetites, or to please man, would not eat, while they had not knowledge enough to see that they might eat to the glory of God, giving him thanks, the very meat that had been consecrated to devils, sinned through ignorance against their own souls. They provoked God to jealousy. They neglected that injunction, "Abstain from all appearance of evil," and could not have gone in the spirit of that prayer, "Lead us not into temptation." We read of men having their foolish hearts darkened. When men do not like to retain God in their knowledge, He gives them up to a reprobate mind. He reprobates their ignorance, because resulting from choice. And how large a portion of the sins committed through ignorance will prove, at last, to be of the most enormous character, the last day will tell. Paul considered himself as

having sinned the most outrageously, and almost beyond the possibility of a pardon, when he sinned *ignorantly*, in persecuting the saints; hence would be the last of men to give ignorance any covering.

IV. Neither the text nor context favours the opinion that our conscience may lean in its testimony to the testimony of other consciences. The apostle did not, after being convinced that he might innocently partake of flesh that had been devoted to an idol, yield his convictions on this point, and believe that, in itself considered, it would be wrong so to do. On this point no amount of human testimony would have shaken his convictions. In the influence that the act would have on other and weak minds, lay all the danger, and all the wrong that moved him. For himself he cared not if all the beasts of the forest, and the cattle upon a thousand hills, had been devoted to some spurious deity. He could still feed upon them, and offer them in sacrifice to the God of heaven, whose is the earth, and the fulness thereof. It is true, that if we find other consciences differing in their testimony from ours, it should put us upon inquiry, whether our own decision is right, should render us cautious and watchful. But when we have again and again reviewed the ground, and collected about it all the testimony we can summon, and are still conscious that we have taken the position of duty, no frowns of men, nor loss of interest, nor even death itself can move us, if we fear the Lord, to act in conformity to the views of others, in opposition to the testimony of our own conscience.

Hence the reason why the people of God have so repeatedly been denominated obstinate. Their false brethren, or the men of the world, have demanded of

them what they could not conscientiously do. A Roman governor writing to one of the emperors respecting the Christians, after fully clearing them from all the charges that had been brought against them, still declares them deserving of death, because of their obstinacy. And wherein lay their obstinacy? Simply in this. They would not conform to heathen customs, when such conformity implied any connivance at idolatry. They would not assemble with the worshippers of Jupiter, would not put up his idols in their temple, while the heathen would readily allow an image of Jesus Christ to be erected in their temples. Thus the war began in the exclusive claims of an enlightened Christian conscience. Many a martyr was offered life, if he would do the smallest act of implied idolatry, would bow at the shrine of Diana, or kiss the image of the virgin mother, or carry the cross in his bosom; but his choice was rather death. And it cannot be considered surprising that men who themselves have no conscience, but can bend to any doctrine, opinion or practice, should pronounce this all obstinacy.

In *vindicating the principle* from which the apostle acted I should choose to say,

First, it evinced a *deep knowledge* of the *obligations* of the divine law. Paul did not go beyond the demands of that law. It allowed him to eat meat, even the meat that had been offered to an idol; and still it demanded of him that he yield his rights to bless his fellow-men. What, did God himself render the thing lawful, and then make another law depriving him of the very privilege he had granted? Intricate as this case may look, it presents us one of the most common maxims of Christian deportment. The property that God has put into my hands, is mine to use according to the discretion that God has given me; and still such a cry of distress

may reach me as to render it my duty to devote it all to the cure of that distress. I may have barely bread enough to feed my family; but I may hear that some family is starving near me, and may be obligated to divide that bread, which is my own, and which I may in ordinary circumstances lawfully give to my children, with that starving family. I may have with me only the raiment that can warm me, and it is my own, to be used as I wish, and still a higher law may require me to divide that covering with my neighbour.

Nor does it essentially alter the case that the misery is near me, and moves my sympathy. It may be far off, and still my perfect knowledge of its existence may render this higher law obligatory. Men need not cherish the persuasion that God makes no other claim upon their prosperity than that of being honest. Admit that this is the first claim, the second is like unto it, that we be benevolent. And how came we by the persuasion that the latter claim is not as binding as the former? If one had an estate of fifty thousand dollars, and he owed one thousand, how could he presume to count that he has forty-nine thousand to bequeath to his children, till he had inquired whether the law of benevolence did not levy its claim to five or ten thousand dollars more, previously to his deciding what portion he might leave to his children? Or may one give his whole estate to his children, and leave them to discharge all his obligations of charity? If so, he should have educated them accordingly, and be sure, before his death, that he has a benevolent offspring, who will obey the law of love. Or is the law of benevolence more loose and undefined than the law of righteousness, a law that we may or may not fulfil? No. We are as strongly obligated to be benevolent, as to be honest. Paul would obey the

statute requiring him to abstain from meat, if the salvation of his brother required it, as promptly and perfectly, as the statute of honesty, requiring him to pay for the cloak or the parchment he had purchased. Is it that the law of man has required honesty, and fixed a penalty to its violation, while the law of benevolence is a law of God, that men have made the distinction they have? I answer, the law of God binds the good man firmly as any municipal statute. When he says, To do good and to communicate forget not, the statute takes hold of the conscience of the good man equally with that municipal statute requiring him to discharge the note to which he put his hand and seal.

My life is my own, and God has made it my duty to preserve it, but the case may happen when a higher law may obligate me to lay down my life for the good of others. It may be my duty, at the greatest risk, to attempt the rescue of others from death by fire or flood; or there may come again a period of the church, when the good of Zion, the glory of God, and the advance of truth, may require the sacrifice of life. And this higher law must be obeyed. While the law of God allows us to provide for our own interest, there is in the same statute-book a law to this effect, "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Now by what argument shall one free himself from obligations of obedience to this statute, while yet he feels the authority of that other statute in the same book, "Thou shalt not steal?"

This making the whole of religion to consist in honesty, (we will not now stop to inquire whether the sticklers for this religion are more honest than others,) is virtually denying that there is any law of benevolence; that there is any case when God himself requires us to give back a

right he has given us. And yet this is the very law that governed the apostle. God had given him a right in common with others to eat meat, and even the very meat that had been devoted to an idol, but God commanded him, if his brother's good required it, to forego this right, and abandon the very privilege that had been given him by charter and by oath.

We have here, probably, one of the most wide and glaring distinctions found among the professors of godliness. There are those who obey and those who do not obey this law of benevolence. And the pretence for disobedience is, that the law is not definite. God has required me to pay that I owe; here the *debt* measures exactly the *obligations*. But the law which reads, "Lend, hoping for nothing again," leaves it doubtful how much I must lend. And that law, "Give early of thy substance to the Lord," leaves it doubtful how much we must give. And that law, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them," leaves it doubtful how much we must *do* from the difficulty of deciding how much we would *have done*. And still these statutes require us to *lend* and *give* and *do*, and are as obligatory as the laws of honesty. Paul determined to obey these higher requisitions, and be governed by the law of benevolence.

SERMON XL.

THE ENLIGHTENED CONSCIENCE UNBENDING.—No. II.

1 Corinthians viii. 13.

If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth.

To have discriminating views of the obligations of the divine law, is one of the first prerequisites to a healthful growing piety. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." The renewed heart must have a relish for obedience, as far as the rules of obedience are known. And he is the wisest believer who can discern the most accurately the bearing of the divine precepts upon the common every-day concern of human life. Perhaps it would not be asserting too much to say that in the want of this is seen the grand cause why so many professed believers are of so little use to the church of Christ. They have some general knowledge of the divine precepts, but do not take the pains they should, or have not the means that would be desirable, in learning to trace the law into its ramifications of bearing and of import. They know they should not worship idols, but do not discern when wealth, or honour, or pleasure is pursued idolatrously. They know they should not perform common labour on the Sabbath day, but do not discover exactly when their conversation or employment has become too worldly to comport with the sanctification of that holy rest. They know they should not steal, but do not discern when exactly their covetous practices or hard dealings have transcended the limits of honesty.

They know they should not lie, but how often can they be seen hovering on the very line of demarcation between falsehood and truth. They may not swear profanely, but *when exactly* their hasty and passionate dialect transcends the bounds of Christian soberness, they may not be very skilful to discern. The church have embosomed some whose language had all the coarseness and repulsion of profaneness, except that the name of God was not used.

Now nothing can be more desirable than that the Christian character be better purified. And this would be the sure result of a better knowledge of the spirit and extent of the divine precepts.

I proposed, in the preceding discourse, *to illustrate the conduct* of the apostle in the case before us, and *vindicate* and *apply the principle* on which he acted. I remarked, under the first particular, that he could not mean *that one man should make another man's conscience his guide;* nor *that one man's conscience should abridge another man's liberty;* nor did he mean *to palliate ignorance;* nor *that one conscience might lean in its testimony to that of other consciences.*

In vindicating the principle on which the apostle acted, I observed that *it evinced a deep knowledge of the obligations of the divine law.* I now observe,

Secondly. The apostle evinced *expanded benevolence.* He allowed his love to the brethren to abridge his freedom. What otherwise was lawful he would not do, if it would injure them. He acted on the broad Christian principle that he was to regard in all his conduct the sanctification and salvation of his fellow-men. He must look around him, before he acted, to see on whom the influence of his example would bear, and shape his actions, and even abridge his liberties by this considera-

tion. He carried with him the strong and controling impression that he was acting for the church and for the world. His deeds were all immortal. Souls bound for eternity were all around him; and if he gave them any impulse, it must be toward the kingdom of God. For this he must give account at the last. The law of God that left him free, had a law above it that required him to be benevolent. The license to eat was modified by a precept that required him to beware lest his liberty became a stumbling-block to them that were weak, and thus souls perish for whom Christ died.

And we shall find this a Christian principle of broad and mighty application. If I have wealth and leisure, it may not be a sin occasionally to let an hour pass unoccupied; but I may not be idle in the place and in the presence of those who may be tempted by my example to idleness, and poverty and crime. If I have abundantly the means, it may not be wrong to wear better vestments than those whose idleness, or improvidence, or appetites, have clothed them in rags; but I may not set an example of that extravagance in dress which will lead others into dishonest and criminal adornings. The case may be such that a very strong necessity may require me to employ the hours of Sabbath in secular toils; but care, such as that with which I would eye the approach of death, must be taken lest my example, upon such as cannot know my necessity, may exert a destructive influence against the commandment of God. I may see a man so consummately mischievous and wicked as to be justified in denominating him "a child of the devil, an enemy of all righteousness;" but great care must be taken not to deal in railing accusation. The case may occur when I may lawfully put to my lips the cup that contains strong drink; but not for a world may I do it

in the place, at the time, in the circumstances, or in the presence of men who may by my example be drawn into the vortex of inebriation. I may be where vice is so bold and so supported, that it cannot safely or profitably be rebuked; but I may not linger there a moment beyond the limits of a dire necessity, lest others be tempted to abide there because they love to. I may be lawfully absent from the sanctuary or the place of prayer; but I may not, *under the price of a soul*, set the example of treating contemptuously the ordinances of God. I may see occasion to pour my rebuke upon the highest authorities of my country; but I may not refuse to submit to "the powers that be," and that are ordained of God. There may be many deeds which, in themselves considered, a good conscience would approve, but which, in their bearing upon the spiritual interests of men, conscience would denounce iniquitous. This world is governed by public sentiment; which I may not corrupt for my life. The mass of its population are moving on to hell by an impulse to which I would not add the weight of a feather for a world. A very small remnant are "straying upward," whose advance I would not retard for my house full of silver and gold. Such was the spirit of benevolence with which the apostle declared "I will eat no meat while the world standeth, if meat make my brother to offend.'

THIRDLY. There was in the conduct of the apostle in this matter a display of *great Christian magnanimity*. He acted emphatically under the impression, "None of us liveth to himself" He did not care that every act of his went to gratify himself, and exalt himself, and add some gloss to his own reputation. He could not agree to dissociate himself from the brotherhood, and be content to guard himself from danger, and

leave others to spell out their own escape and manage their own defence. If *he* could go to a heathen feast and eat harmlessly, but his brother who should go with him might receive damage, or the host who invited them be sustained in his idolatry, he would not be there. Thus he headed the infant church, as some generous-hearted and brave commander, who would place himself in the edge of every battle, and be among the last to retreat, and die the shield and champion of his warriors. Thus he patterned after his Master, who laid down his life for the sheep, who was rich, but for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich.

And the Christian spirit in all ages must be the same. When the child of God might hide himself from exposure, he may not, if his retreat would endanger his brethren. If others would defend the hated doctrines, and the self-denying duties, and handle the more obnoxious matters of discipline, and he could gain applause by *in*action, he covets no such honour. Nehemiah would not hide himself in the temple, from the threatened invasion of his three inveterate enemies. If others would build the walls, and defend the fortresses, and watch the enemy, and his own life was ever so precious to the enterprize, still he would not lurk behind the walls, and hide himself in the sanctuary.

Believers may not take their shoulders from under the burden and leave their brethren to bear it. The spirit of the gospel has none of the world's time-serving mixed with it. If attacks must be made upon the whole army of the gods, and Jupiter should himself array the host, Paul would dare his thunders and expose his weakness, and lead the church of God to the onset. Thus he stood in the streets of Athens, and poured out his contempt upon their priests, their shrines, and their sacrifices,

till we wonder that he lived to rehearse the adventure. He knew the commander he marched under, and the goodness of the cause he supported, and the firmness of that decree that pledged him the victory.

If exposure is demanded in the cause of the Lord, the believer dare be exposed; if courage is wanted, the Christian has it. If one has it not, he may well doubt whether he shall triumph at the last with the sacramental host. If sin is to be attacked in its stronghold, you may send any Christian to the onset. He has commenced with sin a war of extermination, and has no measure to keep with it. If the vice be popular, he cares not. If interest holds him back, he cares not. If he must go to the onset alone, he dares to meet the enemy of God and man in his deadliest assault. He dare tell a whole community by precept and example that their Sabbath-breaking will destroy them; that their profaneness is cowardly, and vulgar, and ruinous; that their vile cup, when it has enriched a few, and made paupers of the multitude, and murdered wives and children, and blasted their individual and civil reputation, will, in its final results, damn eternally the whole mass of its advocates, from the man who gains an office by its influence, down to the vagabond who dies in the ditch by the use of it. If sin is to be attacked, there is not a single coward among all God's elect. And if any hope they belong to that number, who dare not commence hostilities with sin, they had better know soon, that when the marriage supper is spread, and those who were ready have gone in with the bridegroom to the marriage, they must be in outer darkness.

Fourthly. The apostle, in the case before us, displayed *great Christian wisdom and prudence.* I know that some would suppose that the very opposite of

this was true; that if he wished to put down idolatry and convert the heathen, he must go to their feasts, and eat their sacrifices, and drink their oblations, and by no means separate himself from their society, lest he lose his influence over them. He must not push matters so far for fear of a reaction that should frustrate all his hopes. But Paul had more wisdom, and knew that in order to cure idolatry he and his brethren must stand wholly aloof from it, and thus render those ashamed who practised it. Had he attended freely their feasts, and took all his weaker brethren with him, he would have done mischief in two ways. The heathen would never have abandoned their gods, and many of the Christians would have gone back to idolatry; and thus the whole work of founding the Christian churches would have been to be done over. Exactly thus may we prescribe for the cure of other vices. To cure profaneness, we must mingle, they say, with the swearers, and smile at their witty oaths, and invite them to our houses, and employ them in our service, and let our children hear them swear, and never let them know that we are ashamed of them; thus they have the full benefit of our chaste conversation, and we shall occasionally have opportunity to check them! To cure intemperance we must not be too bold in our measures. We must not refuse to drink wine occasionally, nor advise others to quit it wholly; must not deprecate the sale of the poison, nor refuse to keep it in our houses, nor refuse to deal it out to the labourer, or the visiter, nor forbid our children to take it, nor cry down the whole article as useless, a curse and a nuisance: all this will drive the intemperate from us, so that we can have no influence over them to persuade them to quit it! Exactly the opposite advice that Paul would give. By such prescriptions we might keep this a drunk-

en world forever; might sow the seeds of inebriation in the appetite of every child, till one generation after another shall go down to hell rapidly, as a merciful God shall be provoked to execute his law, till at length this lost world would become depopulated, and no millennial period ever come. Ask Paul to prescribe, and he would say, "Touch not, taste not, handle not."

Sin is one of the things with which we can make no covenant. It is like fire; we are scorched to death while we parley with it. Let me illustrate my views by an anecdote. A neighbour of my father's, a merchant, is said to have been in his store one evening, and snuffed his candle and threw the ignited wick into a barrel of powder. Quick as thought he thrust in his hand and took it out, but was afterward on the point of fainting when he reflected on the danger he had been in. This was told me as a fact in my childhood. Be it doubted if you choose; still it illustrates the danger of dabbling with sin. He might not deliberate, nor ask counsel, nor proceed moderately, or he and his family had perished. Just so with sin: to parley with it is ruin, to be intimate with it is death, to abide under its power is hell.

Paul was wise in keeping no measures with idolatry. Whether to destroy it, or save his brethren, or himself, or honour Christ, was his highest object, his conduct was noble. To flee from it, and have no fellowship with it, even if he must never taste flesh while the world stood, was the very course of heavenly wisdom. He would thus render ashamed the worshippers of idols, would exert the strongest influence on the infant church, and best honour and please his Master.

But the question will rise, Are we obligated by Paul's example? We surely are. He was teaching the truth of God under the infallible guidance of his Spirit; and whether he advances that truth in the form of exhorta-

tion, or of logical argument, or expostulation, or states the resolve to which the Spirit's influence had brought his own mind, I know of no argument by which we can repel the truth under one of these forms of instruction rather than another. I know of no sentiment more dangerous than thus to cavil at truth because taught by men we hate, or in any particular form of language. We could easily in this way destroy the influence of more than half the Bible.

And besides there was nothing unreasonable in his resolve. There would be no danger to health or life from the entire abstinence from meat which he proposes. And the object to be gained was worth the sacrifice. And moreover, the gospel enjoins self-denial on every Christian, and promises heaven on the express condition that we deny ourselves and take up the cross and follow Christ. It would seem surprising, then, if any should doubt but that the apostle was inspired to teach the churches this high principle of benevolence, practised at the expense of a long protracted course of self-denial. It is that redeeming principle that has saved the church, and will save the world. Till Christians understand it, and act upon it, they have not learned the heavenly art of being useful; and if they may even hope to reach heaven, must assuredly calculate to be in that world stars of the smallest magnitude.

APPLICATION.

In applying further the principle which actuated the apostle in the case we have reviewed, I would say, in the

1. Place, That *honesty* should lead every believer to its adoption. We profess to have passed from death unto life, to have been plucked as brands from the burning. And we see those around us who are urging their

way to hell, and we profess to love them. If possible, they should be stopped in their career. And if there is the most forlorn hope that our example would do any thing to stop them, our example should be employed. Else how can we be honest in our profession. If *idleness* is destroying souls, (and probably few sins are destroying more,) how can we be honest if we will not refrain from wasting precious hours with prayerless idlers, who, in the hordes that indolence collects around them, are learning and teaching the deadliest principles and the most polluting practices? And if drunkenness is destroying souls, how can we be honest in our profession of benevolence, if there is any amount of sacrifice within our power that we will not make to dam up and dry up this broad, and deep, and dark river of death, that is bearing down to hell such a mighty congregation.

2. *Consistency of character* should lead us to adopt this high principle of Christian benevolence. We profess, as Christians, that religion has a value paramount to all other interests combined. We believe that interrogatory assertion, that the whole world is not to be compared in value to a soul. Hence any sacrifice possible should be made to save a soul; and if the world see us ready to make none, will God save our character?

Believers are accustomed to pray that the kingdom of Christ may come, that men may be converted and saved, and we profess to be asking for large favours. But when we have risen from our knees, and it is seen that we can practice no self-denial to have our prayers answered, can we hope to conceal our hypocrisy? Can we have any consistency of character in the world's estimation? Will they hear us pray? Will they have any faith in our tears? No, none.

3. It will be seen, of course, that we cannot be *useful*

in the *absence* of this high principle of Christian benevolence. The world honours and believes the man whose actions tally with his tears and his professions. By him they will be influenced. But they must not see us trying to escape the cross. They must not *hear* us *pray*, and then *not see* us *do*. We may not rebuke their profaneness, nor their Sabbath-breaking, nor their gambling, and then edge along as near as may be to the very crimes we have rebuked. We may not reprobate their intemperance, and yet drink temperately with them out of the same cup. We do them no good by our admonitions. They will wield dexterously that motto, "Physician, heal thyself." Believers should not forget that though they may have learned more than other men of Bible truth, yet in native unsanctified cunning, the men of the world are before them, and will perceive a discrepancy of character even sooner perhaps than themselves. "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light."

4. Without that spirit of high Christian benevolence which will lead us to make great sacrifices to bless our fellow-men, our religion will not render us *happy*. The child of God is happy in doing good. In this God is happy. When he had built the world and made man, he surveyed his works with delight because they were all good. When we cannot reflect that we have done good, the mind corrodes itself and is put to pain.

Finally. We cannot be *safe* while wanting this spirit of Christian benevolence. Every soul that is born of God has it. It is that most prominent feature of the divine image that was lost in the fall and is restored in regeneration. "If one loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen." "Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love to one another."

SERMON XLI.

THE CONCENTRATED RESULTS OF THE GOSPEL.

Isaiah liv. 13.

And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

In the preceding chapter there is brought into view the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the blessed effects of his death upon the beings whom he died to redeem. "He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied." Under that new dispensation which his mission should introduce, the barren should sing and the desolate become fruitful. The church is directed to "enlarge the place of her tent, and stretch forth the curtains of her habitation," with the assurance of a large increase of her spiritual offspring. She shall branch forth on the right hand and on the left, shall inherit the Gentiles, shall forget the shame of her youth, and wipe off the reproach of her widowhood. Her Maker, the Lord of Hosts will be her husband; and the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth her Redeemer. "In a little wrath God hid his face from her for a moment, but will now, with everlasting kindness, have mercy on her."

This language, though highly figurative, is yet easily understood. The prophet evidently looked forward to gospel times, and sung of a period then very distant, but in its events more glorious than any that had gone by. We can easily believe that he had at length a distant but delightful view of the present period, and pleased his soul with the very scenes that are now transpiring before

our eyes, when the children of the church should become wise and happy. "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children."

That God has cast our lot in a favoured period of the church, there can be no doubt. And the man who is not thankful to see opening before himself and his children, a prospect so rich, must have a mind which none will covet, and a heart which is the seat of very sordid and grovelling affections. It will be my wish, in what will now be said, to awake your attention to those objects which Isaiah saw, and in which he exulted some twenty-five hundred years since. I would then remark,

I. The *present* is a period of *great interest*. This is a truth which must impress the mind of every thinking man. In addition to what our fathers have told us, we have learned by our own experience, that the world is undergoing a vast moral change. So rapid are the movements of providence that we can scarcely keep pace with its present history.

1. This is an age prominent in its *benevolent exertions*. Our fathers, with all their piety, made almost no exertion to better the condition of a miserable world. They held in their hands the charter of eternal life, but made few inquiries respecting the extent to which this blessing was enjoyed. They often read the command, "Go ye unto all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," but had no idea that it was a precept binding them to disseminate that gospel on which they hung their own hopes of everlasting life. Few of us that have lived fifty years have received from our parents any lesson on this subject. They taught us those branches of duty with which they were acquainted, and put into our hands that book from which, through the

teachings of the Holy Ghost, the present generation has learned one new lesson: that those who have the gospel must give it to the world.

Hence the Christian world has waked to the subject, and the benevolent heart has learned to expand, and spread its sympathies over all the miseries of the apostacy. Nor have the advocates of that charity which regards only the body, and terminates its toils at the sepulchre, any cause to mourn at the change. Since the Bible has been making its way to the habitations of poverty, it has not diminished their wonted supply of bread. He that pities the *body* may have no compassion for the *soul*, but he who aims to save the *soul* from death, will feel for the miseries of the *body*. The charity of the gospel is generous and impartial.

Nor yet have the advocates of that charity which begins at home, the least occasion to regret the exertions made in the more distant field. It was since we cast our eye upon India, and heard the moans of Africa, and saw and wept over the desolation of Palestine, that we have pitied strongly the wandering tribes of our own America, and have attempted to build up the waste places in our immediate vicinity. We had begun to translate the Scriptures into other languages, that we might export them to other nations, before we had made the inquiry whether there were not families within ten minutes' walk of home who had no Bible. The poor in our land, and under the eaves of our sanctuaries, have reason to bless the day, when the Christian world began to pity the distant heathen.

I said the Christian world had *waked*, I should have said they had *begun to wake:* for many who eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord, are yet as profoundly asleep as though nothing new had transpired.

Still to some extent exertions are made to carry into effect the system of the gospel. The Bible is going into every language, and missionaries into every country, and the hope and the promise is, that soon the angel, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, will publish it to every kindred, and nation, and tongue, and people. The rich are casting of their abundance, and the poor their mite, into the treasury of the Lord. More is done now in a single year to lessen the miseries of the apostacy, than had been done perhaps in ages previously to the commencement of the present era.

And no part of Christendom is yet impoverished. Too little has been done to be esteemed a sacrifice. We have distributed to the hungry nothing but the crumbs of our plenteous board. We have done so little that scarcely a conscience in Christendom is satisfied; so little that if our children should hereafter learn the amount of our charities, they would burn the record that they might conceal our shame. Philanthropy must yet ten-fold its sacrifices, or the present generation of the heathen must almost all share the destiny of their unpitied predecessors. But when all this is said, and said truly, the present is *comparatively* an age of charity. There begins to be opened an avenue to the conscience and the heart. There is *some* pity where there has been none, there is some interest felt where recently there was an indifference the most profound.

2. The present age is distinguished by a *union* of *interest* and *effort* among the friends of the gospel. Most that was done till recently was the effect of individual exertion. The pious heart was always benevolent. I should offend my readers and myself, if I should deny to our dear parents who are resting in their graves

all the sympathy and the charity which they entailed to their offspring. But benevolent exertions during most of the ages that have gone by was personal and insulated. The Christian church had not learned that union of effort would augment her strength, and multiply the resources of her charity. This discovery under the aids of the Spirit, has produced those wondrous efforts that constitute the glory of the present era. Our Bible and education societies have contributed greatly to break down those barriers, that have so long and so mischievously separated the followers of the Lord Jesus. How consoling to see Christians while yet they are firm in advocating what they conceive to be the doctrines of truth, lay aside the rigidness of their sect, and unite their efforts to advance the interests of a common cause, and the honours of a common Master. The Foreign Missionary Society, which gives high promise of cultivating vast tracts of the moral wilderness, have set the Christian world an example, and are acting with a wisdom and an energy for which every believer in the churches should give thanks. And that union which begins to exist at home, on heathen ground is perfect. There, we are told, the communion of each church is open to the fellowship of others. The concert of prayer, if no other existing fact could be named, is an instance of united effort which distinguishes the present era from all that have gone by. Here is united the whole Christian church in offering to the God of grace, the same prayer and the same intercessions. Dear brethren, whether you have or have not been happy on these occasions, you may rest assured that no feature of the present epoch yields a higher hope that the latter-day glory is nigh. God will hear the entreaty which is poured into his ear at the same moment, from ten thou-

sand lips. He will regard those petitions, which, as that sun encircles the earth, is sent into the court of heaven, from every isle and continent where dwells a heaven-born mind. The enemies of the Lord Jesus and his church, had never such just occasion to fear the total ruin of their cause as at the present moment. They have hitherto been able to *divide*, and have hoped by this means to *destroy*, but they now see formed against them an impenetrable phalanx by whose firmness all their boasted prowess is covered with the utterest contempt. Hence infidelity has quit the field, the Pope is palsied in his chair, Dagon is prostrate before the ark, the bands of Mahomet are beginning to be weakened, the Turk is beginning to perish by the sword, and his slaves are demanding emancipation.

3. The present era is marked by that *general diffusion of knowledge* with which no former age has been blessed. I refer now to that kind of knowledge which moves the springs of action, a knowledge of the present state of the world. The groans of the wretched have been unheeded, because they have not been heard. We had no conception a few years since, that six or seven hundred millions of our fellow-creatures had never heard of a Saviour. We had not explored the vast tracts of moral desolation, nor had taken the gauge and dimension of human misery, depression and contempt. The prince of this world hid the extent of his dominions, and concealed the immensity of their unnumbered population, in the mists that issued from the bottomless pit. No encroachments were made upon his kingdom, because the great mass of the Christian community had never known the magnitude of his empire. Believers had long prayed, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven," but they had never conceived

to what narrow limits that kingdom was confined, and of how little a portion of his promised inheritance the Prince of peace had taken actual possession.

But on these subjects there is now poured in upon the Christian community a beam of light. The vehicles of religious intelligence visit now the humblest cottage, and awaken prayer and charity, wherever the Bible, through the divine blessing, has produced a heavenly temper. We are becoming as familiar with India, and with the isles of the Pacific, as if they had floated into our vicinity, and were in the circle of our neighbourhood. The unread servant-boy peruses the records of Christian research, reads, learns the list of charity, and weeps at the funeral of the missionary. Thus is beginning to be touched every spring of charity, thus is brought upon his knees every believer that has the smallest interest at the court of heaven. And the happy result is, that the Christian world is organizing. There is making a simultaneous attack upon the various outposts of the kingdom of darkness. The widow's mite mingles with the charities of the wealthy, and hastens to constitute that river, which carries fertilization and life to the famishing population of a world.

4. The present is an era of *self-devotion*. In the ages past, if any section of the church waked to their duty, and would have sent the bread of life to the hungry, they found it almost impossible to procure an agent who would go and dispense their charity. He must know, before he could be employed, that he should be well supported, and might soon return; that he should be under the protection of human law, and that his life should not be exposed to the paw of the lion, and the mouth of the crocodile. But God, at the juncture when they are needed, has raised up men for the ser-

vice, whose minds are subjected to none of these cowardly misgivings. They offer themselves, with all their wealth, and their children. They ask nothing but their raiment and their bread, wish never to return, have no anxiety for human protection, brave the terrors of a trackless wilderness, and can sleep sweetly in the society of beasts and savages. If thirty families, farmers and mechanics, are needed for some distant and hazardous mission, one hundred are ready. It is true that there is a lack of able and well-educated ministers, even yet, but this arises from a distressing *deficiency of the number*, and not from a *want of a spirit of self-devotion.* Thousands are wishing for a share in this work, if they can but be fitted for the service. They will pledge themselves to serve you in any country, to traverse any desert, or cross any sea, or surmount any dangers, if you will give them opportunities for preparation; and will refund your charities if their hearts faint at the service.

If the occasion would permit, I could mention, as distinguishing the present era, a number of other particulars equally interesting. God prospers, remarkably, the enterprises of his people. There is a vast increase of general knowledge, and general happiness. The bonds of slavery are breaking. The terrors of despotism are softening. The rights of conscience are beginning to be better understood. The art of war is slowly coming into disuse. The unhappy begin to know their condition. The ignorant invite instruction. The heathen are contributing to furnish themselves the means of science, and the bread of life. Infidelity is ashamed of its tenets. The governments of the earth are beginning to aid in raising the degraded and the lost to happiness and heaven. And much as the philanthropist may still

find to weep over, he will descry in the present movements of the world many things that give promise of a happier age at hand, when he may wipe away his tears.

II. It is important that *our children be educated for the period in which they are to live.* If the text contains a promise, then it also points out a duty. "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." That parent has forgotten the first dictate of affection, who does not wish that his children may be wise, useful, and happy, and who does not, by every means in his power, prepare them to act well their part in the generation with which they must mingle.

1. The rising generation should be *well instructed* in *science* and *religion*, that they may act well their part in the age that is opening. Else they can neither be useful, respectable, nor happy. The time has been, when men could have been respectable, without any knowledge of books or of science, but those dark ages have gone by. The Bible, and the tract, and the vehicle of religious intelligence, and even the voluminous commentary, are to be put into the hands of every child throughout Christendom. And he must be able to read and understand their contents, or he will wish that his father had been a Turk, or a Hindoo, and that his mother had borne him on the banks of the Caspian, or at the source of the Ganges. He will be interested in the excursions of the missionary, and must be able to trace his track on the chart, and feel the perils of his station. He must lead in the operations of charity, and must know how to minute and express his thoughts. Perhaps he must become an ambassador of the Lord Jesus, and must have his mind enlarged in the pursuit

of general science. I know you intend to select his employ, he must follow the track you have chosen. No. He will choose for himself, or rather God will choose for him. When you are laid in your grave, he will hear the voice of the Lord, will be afraid to disobey, and will enter and labour in his vineyard. He will leave his plough, his trade, or his clerkship, and will go at the call of some benighted community, to carry them the Book of the covenant, and the message of mercy. And when he shall wish to be useful, if he find himself ignorant and disqualified, he will blame that father, whose memory he loves to revere, but who unkindly introduced him into an enlightened age, with an uncultivated mind.

And our daughters, as well as our sons, must be equipped for the peculiar duties of the age. The gospel has always raised the female sex to an importance which, in lands not blessed with its light, they cannot reach. It was to be expected that an age like the present would bring them into a still more important station. And they have shown their wisdom by their exertions to disseminate that gospel which has rendered them free, enlightened, happy. And they will be, hereafter, the guardians of their sex. And they must then be equipped for the service to which they will assuredly be called, and will be ashamed of their parents, if, when we are in our graves, they shall find themselves too illiterate to take an interest, and act a high and holy part, in the scenes of this illustrious age.

A parent can hardly be more unkind to his children than to neglect their improvement, at a period like the present. It would be cruel to leave them in the midst of enlightened society with minds suited to the taste of a Turk, or a Tartar. I should be afraid, in such a case,

that they would hate my memory, and trample with contempt upon my ashes.

2. We must not merely attend to their *mental improvement*, we must teach them charity. The suffrages of Christendom have been taken, and it is resolved that the miseries of the world must be relieved. But this relief will cost us something more than "Be ye warmed, and be ye filled." We are pained, and so will be our children, if we or they must know of miseries which we may not alleviate. While the eye is pouring forth its tears, the hand will distribute its bounty. But in this matter much will depend on habit. We could give you the names of men who have prayed, "Thy kingdom come," with great fervency this half century, but have never, perhaps, given the price of a Bible to aid the increase of that kingdom. And now, when the claims of the perishing millions are understood, every such prayer they offer is their disgrace. Our children must be taught to be consistent. If they will need mental improvement, because they are to live in an enlightened age, they will no less need a spirit of Christian benevolence, because they are to live in a *liberal* age. Hence, while they are mere children they should be taught to cast their little mites into the treasury of the Lord. When they read the pathetic story of a burning widow, or an immolated babe, or a suffering missionary, tell them, while the tears are flowing, that they must send those heathen a Bible, and contribute to the support of that missionary. Carry them with you to the monthly concert, and enrol their little names upon the list of charity: thus will you prepare them to fill some distinguished station among their enlightened and liberal contemporaries. They will be pillars and polished stones in the house of the Lord, and will do you honour

when the weeds shall be growing upon your sepulchres.

But if our children should carry into manhood the opposite character; should they be ignorant, and covetous, and infidel; should they set themselves to oppose the work of the Lord, and dam up the streams of charity, and exhibit a dark, and contracted, and illiberal spirit; as sure as God is true there is nothing before them but disappointment and shame. They will cover our graves with reproach, and attach a stigma to our name which will adhere to it till it has perished. In the conduct of the child the world will read the character of the parents, and the dead will be arraigned and condemned at the tribunal of the living.

The means of avoiding this doom are in our hands. Let us make our children acquainted with what God is doing, let us put into their hand and pour into their ears the weekly intelligence, and water the advice with prayer, and then whether we live to see the effects or not, our children will rise up and call us blessed. But,

3. They must have the benefit of our example. If we are found opposing the work of the Lord, are unwilling to be enlightened, and are vexed at every solicitation of charity, we shall have children in our own likeness, and they will live only to prolong our disgrace. But if we march up to the work of the Lord ourselves; if our children hear us pray earnestly for the devoted missionary, and see us afflicted when we have missed any opportunity to give of our substance to the Lord, and glad when opportunity presents, and generous in our contributions; they will naturally imbibe the same spirit, and we shall be honoured, and God will be served in our offspring. If we are afraid that a course like this will render us poor, and injure our children, it is either

because we lack the necessary information or doubt the truth of the promise. It is plainly written and easily understood, "Give early of thy substance to the Lord; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty and thy presses burst out with new wine." Now what parent that believes this text to be the word of the Lord, would not rather, far rather, that his children could have a claim to this promise, than any possible human security for the stability and the increase of their fortune? It affixes to every bond we hold the seal of heaven; secures the timely shower, the prosperous breeze, the wisdom necessary to plan our concerns, and the happy combination of circumstances, in every hour when we shall need the interference of a heavenly friend.

Let us, then, leave our children a well-selected library, a mind well cultivated, a conscience awake to duty, a heart habituated to feel the woes of another, and, depend upon it, our estates will be more secure, and our offspring better provided for, than if we should leave them with the opposite habits, in the possession of a kingdom.

Do you say, none but God can do all this for our children. True: and all that is required of us is, that we wish it done, that we entreat him to do it, that we set the example and use the means required. Then if our children will not be obedient, we can have peace in death, and the curse of being their destroyer, will be removed from our shoulders. But we need have no such fears. The frequent and extensive revivals with which God is blessing the churches, gives encouraging promise, that from among the rising generation there is to be selected an army of combatants, who are to march under the captain of their salvation to victory and glory. There is more hope that our children will be saved, than there has been, with respect to any generation that has ever

inhabited the globe. If this is the period predicted in the context, and there are many indications that it is, then the promise is, "Thy children shall *all* be taught of the Lord." Or if this prediction is not to receive its *full* accomplishment, till the lapse of a century, still its *partial* accomplishment may be the inheritance of our children.

III. *The course described will render them happy.* "Great shall be the peace of thy children." The evident indications of Providence are, that there has dawned a new era of the church. If then we do our duty to our children, set the example and enforce the precepts required, our hope may be that they will be among the ornaments of the risen and rising generation. They will go into life with habits suited to the sphere in which they are to act. They will associate with a benevolent community, will have a delightful employ, will witness most glorious displays of the wisdom and power of God, and will doubtless have those communications of the Spirit which create the best possible enjoyments of a rational mind. If these hopes are not all a dream what a blessing it now is to be a parent. When our hearts have ached for our children, how such a hope would have cheered us. If they may live and act worthily amid the scenes of such a period, it is quite enough. AMEN.

END OF VOL. II.

BOOKS

PUBLISHED AND FOR SALE BY

JOHN S. TAYLOR,

THEOLOGICAL AND SUNDAY SCHOOL BOOKSELLER,

BRICK CHURCH CHAPEL,

CORNER OF PARK-ROW AND NASSAU-STREET,

OPPOSITE THE CITY HALL, NEW-YORK.

Hints to Parents on the Early Religious Education of Children. By GARDINER SPRING, D. D., Pastor of the Brick Presbyterian Church, New-York. 18mo. with a steel engraving. Price 37½ cts.

From the New-York Weekly Messenger and Young Men's Advocate.

Dr. Spring's Hints to Parents.—One of the prettiest little works of this class that we have ever met with, is just published; it is called "*Hints to Parents on the Religious Education of Children.* By Gardiner Spring, D. D." The author has been long and favorably known to the public as a chaste, powerful, and popular writer. The subject of the present work is one of great moment—one in which every parent has a real interest. And we commend this little volume, not only to pious parents, but to all who desire to bring up their children in such a manner as to make them an honor to themselves and a blessing to their fellow-men.

From the Commercial Advertiser.

Hints to Parents, on the Religious Education of Children. By Gardiner Spring, D. D. This beautiful little volume, coming out at this time, will be peculiarly acceptable to the congregation of the able and excellent author, and will have the effect of a legacy of his opinions on a most important subject, now that for a time they are deprived of his personal instructions. It is a work that should be in the hands of every parent throughout our country, who has the temporal and eternal interest of his offspring at heart. The few and leading maxims of the Christian religion are plainly and practically enforced, and the parent's duties are descanted on in a train of pure and beautiful eloquence, which a father's mind, elevated by religion, only could have dictated. We believe that a general knowledge of this little volume would be attended with consequences beneficial to society, since a practice of its recommendations could scarcely be refused to its solemn and affectionate spirit of entreaty.

The Ministry we Need. By S. H. Cox, D. D., and others. 37½ cents.

From the Literary and Theological Review.

This neat little volume comprises the inaugural charge and address which were delivered on occasion of inducting the PROFESSOR OF SACRED RHETORIC AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY in the Theological Seminary at Auburn. The friends of Dr. Cox will not be disappointed in his inaugural address. It bears the impress of his talents and piety—his enlarged views and catholic spirit. To analyze it would convey no adequate idea of its merits. His theme is the ministry of reconciliation—"the chosen medium by which God conciliates men—the mighty moral enginery that accomplishes his brightest wonders—the authentic diplomacy of the *King of kings* working salvation in the midst of the earth." The manner in which he treats his subject, in relation to the importance of the Christian ministry, and the kind of ministry needed in this age and nation, we need hardly remark will amply repay the perusal of his brethren, if not be interesting and instructive to the church at large.

"Error-scenting notoriety" may not altogether like the

odor of this little book; and the "*lynx-eyed detecters of heresy*" will not be forward to approve a work in which they are handled with unsparing severity; but by "all the favorers on principle of a pious, sound, educated, scriptural, and accomplished ministry in the church of God, and throughout the whole world, as the MINISTRY WE NEED, to whom this little volume is most respectfully inscribed," it will be read, and, we trust, circulated.

The Christian's Pocket Companion.—Selected from the works of JOHN ROGERS, Dr. OWEN, DAVID BRAINERD, PRESIDENT EDWARDS, and others, with an Introduction by Rev. JOHN BLATCHFORD, of Bridgeport, Conn. 25 cents.

The following is from Mr. Blatchford's Letter to the Publisher:

I am happy to learn, through your letter of last evening, your design of publishing the little work containing the private rules by which the lives of such men as Edwards, and Brainerd, and Rogers, and Mason, were regulated.

That little volume (which is the only copy that I have ever met with) was, for many of the last years of his life, the pocket-companion of my honored father, the late Samuel Blatchford, D. D. of Lansingburgh. This circumstance alone would give it a value in my estimation—as also with the many who were associated with him as a father in the ministry, as well as those who were permitted to receive "the message of salvation from his lips."

But in addition to this, who is there that loves the cause of Christ and the souls of men among the ministers of the Lord Jesus in our day, that has not often, amid the toils and discouragements and anxieties which so thickly beset their path, turned away to such men, and inquired the secret, if any there was, by which they accomplished so much for the Church, and secured to themselves a character for such eminent holiness? This little book answers these questions, and introduces us to these "men of God," in the closet, in the family, in the social circle, in the labors of the pulpit, and in the discharge of their multiplied parochial duties; and I am confident that no one can rise from its perusal without being incited to more prayer and more diligence in their varied efforts to adorn the "doc-

trines of Christ their Savior" themselves, and in preaching Christ and him crucified to others.

Wishing you all success in your undertaking, I would most fervently commend it to the blessing of God, believing that in giving it to the public, you will greatly subserve the best of causes, and in a very acceptable manner.

JOHN BLATCHFORD.

From the New-York Observer.

Christian's Pocket Companion.—This very small but neat manual, just published, is a compilation of some of the purest sentiments and holiest aspirations of such men as Owen, Rogers, Brainerd, and President Edwards. We venture to say that no Christian can make it the familiar companion of his *heart*, as well as "pocket," without becoming evidently a holier and a happier man.

Practical Thoughts. By the late Dr. Nevins, of Baltimore. 50 cents.

Thoughts on Popery. By Dr. Nevins. 50 cts.

From the New-York Observer of April 9th, 1836.

The *Practical Thoughts* consists of forty-six articles on prayer, praise, professing Christ, duties to Sabbath Schools, the monthly concert, the conversion of the world, violations of the Sabbath, liberality, man's inconsistency, the pity of the Lord, Christian duty, death, &c.; the last of which are "Heaven's Attractions" and "The Heavenly Recognition," closing with the words, "By the time we have done what I recommend, we shall be close upon the celestial confines—perhaps within heaven's limits." * * *

There the sainted author laid down his pen, leaving the article unfinished, and went, none can doubt, to enjoy the blessed reality of the scenes he had been so vividly describing.

These articles combine great simplicity, attractiveness, and vivacity of thought and style, with a spiritual unction scarcely to be found in any other writer. Thousands of minds were impressed with them as they first appeared: they reproved the inconsistent Christian, roused the slumbering, and poured a precious balm into many an afflicted

bosom. While writing them, the author buried a beloved wife, and had daily more and more sure indications that the hour of his own departure was at hand; and God enabled him, from the depths of his own Christian experience, to open rich fountains of blessing for others.

The *Thoughts on Popery* are like, and yet unlike, the other series. There is the same sprightliness of the imagination, the same clearness, originality, and richness of thought, with a keenness of argument, and sometimes irony, that exposes the baseness and shamelessness of the dogmas and superstitions of Popery, and that must carry home conviction to the understanding and heart of every unprejudiced reader. Piece by piece the delusion, not to say imposition, of that misnamed church are exposed, under the heads of the Sufficiency of the Bible, the Nine Commandments, Mortal and Venial Sins, Infallibility, Idolatry, Relics, the Seven Sacraments, Penance, the Mass, Celibacy of the Clergy, Purgatory, Canonizing Saints, Lafayette not at Rest, The Leopold Reports, Supererogation, Convents, &c. We know of nothing that has yet been issued which so lays open the deformities of Popery to common minds, or is so admirably adapted to save our country from its wiles, and to guard the souls of men from its fatal snares.

A View of the American Slavery Question. By E. P. Barrows, Pastor of the First Free Presbyterian Church. 31¼ cents.

From the New-York American of March 26th, 1836.

A View of the American Slavery Question, by E. P. Barrows, Jun. Pastor of the First Free Presbyterian Church, New-York.—John S. Taylor. In this little volume is embodied the substance of two discourses, preached, as we learn from the Introduction, "by the Author, in October, 1835, with particular reference to the condition of his own church." "Their result was a spirit of harmony and good feeling in the church." Such will not, we apprehend, be the result of their publication; for they maintain modestly, but firmly and conscientiously, the right and duty of reasoning and remonstrating with our

southern brethren against the enormity of slavery, and of urging, in all lawful ways, its extinction. The North—partly from mercenary and partly from political motives, and with too many, perhaps, from culpable indifference—seem anxious to stultify all their past efforts against slavery, and yield up even the right of discussing its evils, and exhorting to its abandonment; and hence Mr. Barrows' modest and sincere efforts will not be very welcome to northern recusants, while its doctrines will of course be abhorrent to that chivalrous region where slavery is deemed an ornament and a privilege. Nevertheless, Mr. Barrows may console himself with having borne his testimony to the truth.

Pleasure and Profit, vol. 1, or THE MUSEUM. By Uncle Arthur. 37½ cents.

Pleasure and Profit, vol. 2, or THE BOY'S FRIEND. By Uncle Arthur. 37½ cents.

Pleasure and Profit, vol. 3, or MARY AND FLORENCE. By Uncle Arthur. 37½ cents.

Missionary Remains, or SKETCHES OF EVARTS, CORNELIUS, AND WISNER. By Gardiner Spring, D. D. and others. 37½ cents.

Advice to a Brother. By a Missionary. Price 31 cents.

Early Piety. By Rev. Jacob Abbott. 18¾ cents.

Scripture Gems. Morocco, gilt. 25 cents.

Sermons by Rev. Charles G. Finney. With a Portrait. $1 00.

The Works of Rev. Daniel A. Clark. In three volumes. $3 00.

Prevailing Prayer. By Rev. C. G. Finney. 32mo. 25 cents.

The National Preacher, printed in an elegant pamphlet form, each number containing two Sermons from living Ministers. Monthly. Edited by Rev. Austin Dickinson. Price one dollar a year in advance.

Also Publisher of

The **Cabinet of Freedom.** Under the supervision of the Hon. WILLIAM JAY, Rev. Prof. BUSH, of the University of New-York, and GERRIT SMITH, Esq. Terms, two dollars per annum, payable in advance.

Also Agent for

The Sabbath School Visiter, published by the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society. Edited by Rev. Asa Bullard, Boston. 50 cents.

Also Agent for

The Missionary Herald. Published for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Monthly. $1 50 a year.

Also Publisher of.

The Naval Magazine. Edited by the Rev. C. S. Stewart, M. A. of the U. S. Navy. $3 00 a year, payable in advance.

J. S. T. has also a large and choice selection of Miscellaneous works, suitable for Sunday School Libraries; together with Theological, Classical, Moral, and Religious Books, Stationary, &c. all of which he will sell at the lowest prices.

A constant supply of the Publications of the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, the American Sunday School

Union, and of the Protestant Episcopal Sunday School Union, at the same prices as sold at their respective Depositories.

N. B. Orders from the country will be immediately attended to, and books forwarded according to directions. Should the selection of books for Sunday Schools be left with J. S. T., and he should forward any which should not suit the purchaser, they may be returned, and the money will be refunded, or other books given in exchange. Those wishing to purchase, are invited to call and examine his stock.

THIS BOOK MUST BE
RETURNED